

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND THE DEBATE
OVER U.S. INVOLVMENT IN BOSNIA

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND THE DEBATE OVER U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN BOSNIA, by MAJ Robert A. Sayre Jr., 91 pages.

The question of U.S. intervention in the conflicts surrounding the breakup of the former Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1995 was one of the most contentious foreign policy problems of the time. After the failure of diplomatic initiatives, the question came down to whether or not military force should be used in an effort to end the conflict. This thesis discusses the role of the U.S. military in this debate. The paper traces the outlines of the course of U.S. policy in the region starting with the Bush administration's unsuccessful efforts in 1991 to prevent the fighting from continuing and spreading to Bosnia and continuing with the Clinton administration's similar efforts. In the Clinton administration, these failures were a result of policy maker indecision, which was greatly compounded by U.S. military leaders exercising their political influence publicly--sometimes in opposition to administration policy--in the national debate over the issue. This hamstrung the policy-making apparatus both because of the huge prestige of the military and its leaders, and because of the relative political weakness of President Clinton vis-à-vis the military. When the decision was finally made to commit military forces to implement the Dayton agreement in 1995, the leadership of the military undertook the mission on its own terms, defined its own success criteria, and vetoed any cooperation with civil implementation authorities. As a result the implementation of the agreement has been much slower than it might have been and there have been other ill effects both in Bosnia and on the U.S. military itself.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU	European Union
HR	High Representative
ICFY	International Committee on the Former Yugoslavia
IFOR	Implementation Force
IPTF	International Police Task Force
JNA	Jugoslavenska Narodna Armija (Yugoslav People's Army)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
OPLAN	Operations Plan
UN	United Nations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
VRS	Vojska Republike Srpske (Army of the Serb Republic)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The process and events leading to U.S. military involvement in the former Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnia) lasted more than three years, spanning parts of two U.S. presidential administrations, one U.S. national election and the tenure of two Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The breakup of the former Yugoslavia was perhaps the major concern of the U.S. foreign policy and national security apparatus through the 1990s; it was certainly the subject of the most public, contentious debate. It was also one of the first major post-cold war foreign-policy tests of the U.S, a test which some say the U.S. failed miserably.¹

If indeed this was a failure, the failure was largely was a matter of indecision, of an inability to match the desire to act in the matter with a concrete rationale for doing so. The conflict within Yugoslavia became especially intense when it spread from its beginnings in the republics of Slovenia and Croatia to Bosnia, and atrocities from Bosnia were widely and prominently reported by the U.S. news media. As fighting began in Bosnia early in the 1990s and presented a threat that violence, refugees, and other problems would spread to Yugoslavia's near neighbors and beyond, debate arose within the U.S. government and with European nations over what, if anything, ought to be done to resolve the problem. The emotions roused by gratuitous-seeming atrocities reported and televised from Bosnia from the very beginnings of the conflict made the debates even more contentious. U.S. political leaders initially believed that there was no stake in the matter for the U.S. and therefore resolved to let European nations lead in dealing with the

problems stemming from the collapse of Yugoslavia, especially when the leadership of the European Union (EU) expressed their willingness--and indeed eagerness--to do so. It was not long before conflicting national priorities, goals, and philosophies in the Balkans made it clear that the EU would not be able to formulate a policy upon which all its members could agree, would not have the wherewithal to resolve the intensifying conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and that to see its goals accomplished in Bosnia the U.S. would have to assume leadership and responsibility.

These intra-EU disputes were similar to intra-U.S. government disputes. Two competing imperatives drove the disputes within the U.S., and the tension between the two was the source of the difficulty in formulating U.S. policy towards the Balkans and towards Bosnia in particular. The first of these imperatives was a significant desire amongst the U.S. public--and a personal desire amongst U.S. government officials--that the U.S. take action to bring an end to brutal, horrific acts of violence that the people of the U.S. were reading about in their newspapers and seeing on their televisions. It was evident to nearly all observers that, given the mindset reflected in the methods used by the contending factions in Bosnia, diplomatic initiatives would probably have little practical effect and that to have a concrete effect on the situation military means would be necessary to one degree or another. The second imperative was the idea that U.S. military force should only be used in certain circumstances and that the situation in Bosnia was not one of those circumstances. According to this view, U.S. forces should only be committed when a vital national interest was at stake, with a clearly defined and achievable mission, and with massive and overwhelming force. This view was a product

of U.S. experiences of the Vietnam War, the recently completed Gulf War, and later the violent end of U.S. humanitarian intervention in Somalia in 1993.

Amongst the most insistent and public advocates for this second point of view were senior U.S. military leaders. From the outset of the public debate, U.S. military leaders were prominent and had a great deal of influence over its course, resorting in a few cases to interviews and op-ed articles in prominent newspapers to make their points. The prestige of the military and personal esteem in which some of its senior leaders were held by the U.S. public gave their views a great deal of weight in the struggle to define U.S. policy and had a marked influence in the course and results of this debate.

The role of the U.S. military in the course of this debate is the subject of this paper. It will trace this involvement from its beginnings during the Presidency of George H.W. Bush through the decision during the term of his successor Bill Clinton to use the military instrument of national power in Bosnia and the debates over the terms of that use. It will examine the involvement of the military in the political process in terms of the influence of this involvement on U.S. policy towards Bosnia, and it will discuss how the political preferences of the military influenced what input the military provided political decision makers. Finally, it will look at the influence that the military's attitudes had on the actual terms of employment of the military in Bosnia once that decision was made, as well as the implications of the military's role in the process of reaching these decisions. To set the stage for this, the paper will begin with an outline of the background of the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian conflict and the beginnings of U.S. involvement there.

There are related issues that will not be discussed. Except as they bear on the main topic, this paper will not treat the problems between the U.S. and its European allies, the role of Russia, the attitude of European governments towards military involvement, the successes and failure of the United Nations (UN) in Bosnia, the role of NATO, nor other similar issues. Any one of these or several others would fill another paper of this or greater length.

Sources used in this paper fall into four categories. These are book-length histories of the conflict and the region; memoirs and studies of the policy disputes within the U.S. government; newspaper, magazine, and journal articles from the period covered and after; and after-action reviews written by units involved in the initial deployments of ground troops into Bosnia. In addition to these sources, I also draw upon my own experience of the region and its people, gained during two and a half years of service in Bosnia as a military attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo.

The history of the region and of the break-up of Yugoslavia is well covered in existing literature, especially since the great increase in interest in the topic associated with the fighting there in the 1990s. Three works are particularly useful. These are *The Death of Yugoslavia* by Laura Silber and Alan Little; *The War in Yugoslavia: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* by Steven L. Burg and Alan Shoup; and *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War* by Susan Woodward. The first of these, a companion to a BBC documentary series, is the best source for the origins and intra-Yugoslav politics of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, including the part played in it by the political use of media. In the filming of the documentary series the BBC and the authors had direct access to many of the leading figures in the Yugoslav

politics of the time. It is also useful for its account of the basic course of the war in Bosnia and for its inclusion of the personal impressions of many of the participants in that war. *The War in Yugoslavia* also covers the background of the conflict, including its economic and cultural background, but is even more valuable for its placing of the conflict into the context of European and international politics of the time and explaining the reactions of outside parties within that context. *Balkan Tragedy* also places the conflict in its international context. This is particularly true regarding its economic background both in its international and intra-Yugoslav aspects; this book is by far the most useful in these areas. It is also very good on the role of the Yugoslav media and its use by Yugoslav politicians in the lead-up to the dissolution of the country. Beyond these basic works there are others covering the conflict and concentrating on particular aspects that are listed in the bibliography. The overwhelming consensus of work in this area, including the three books mentioned above, is that the conflict in the former Yugoslavia was only indirectly related to a history of ethnic tensions in the region and that much more important were the role of competition for scarce economic resources and a scramble for political power following the collapse of the former Communist system both in Yugoslavia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

One other book, *Origins of a Catastrophe* by Warren Zimmerman, who was the last U.S. Ambassador to Belgrade before the dissolution of Yugoslavia, also provides a very useful account of those events. Zimmerman was present in Belgrade throughout the process of dissolution and met with the leaders of all the republics and most of the other political leaders involved. The book records his impressions of those leaders and of events during his tenure in Belgrade. His view on the origins of the conflict and the

nature of the leaders involved in it is consistent with that expressed in the works referred to above.

The course of the domestic political debate over Bosnia in the U.S. is best followed in newspaper and magazine articles from the time. This debate, which began in the midst of a U.S. presidential campaign, was at times highly emotional and driven partly by media coverage of the fighting in Bosnia. As a result, the media coverage of the debate was extensive and included a great deal of commentary as well as reporting. There are some book-length studies that touch upon this subject tangentially, including those by Silber and Little, Shoup and Burg, and Woodward mentioned above. *The Politics of Diplomacy* by James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State under President George H.W. Bush, records the beginnings of U.S. concern with the former Yugoslavia and Bosnia. Two books discuss the intra-government process of forming U.S. policy towards Bosnia, including the process of negotiating the Dayton peace accords. These are *To End a War* by Richard Holbrooke and *Getting to Dayton* by Ivo H. Daalder. These books examine the formation of U.S. policy from the point of view of a special negotiator working fairly independently in the case of Holbrooke and a member of the White House National Security Council staff in Daalder's case.

The relationship of the Clinton administration to the U.S. military and the subject of U.S. civil-military relations in general has been the subject of many newspaper and magazine articles as well as of articles in various academic and professional journals. One is of particular interest in that it mentions the effect of civil-military relations on U.S. military involvement in Bosnia. This is "The Erosion of Civilian Control of the Military in the United States Today" by Richard Kohn, which appeared in the Fall 2000

issue of the Naval War College Review. Kohn's view of civil-military relations during the Clinton administration, also expressed in jointly written articles in the journals *New Republic* and *National Interest*,² is that the U.S. military gained a great deal in prestige and influence over the years preceding the Clinton administration, that this administration had a very difficult time exercising full control over the military, and that the effects of this situation were a growing problem in the U.S.

One book in particular is an excellent source on this topic. This is *My American Journey*, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell's memoir of his years of military service. Kohn's and other writings identify Powell as a key figure in the creation of disproportional military influence within the U.S. government; though he surely did not intend them to do so, Powell's memoirs buttress this argument by showing him gaining mastery of and later using the U.S. policy system to advance and protect the interests of the U.S. military in the formulation of policy. The books mentioned earlier by Richard Holbrooke and Ivo Daalder also are good sources on this as they help show exactly how the military used its influence in the process leading to the Dayton agreement. Insofar as they touch on the course of the Dayton process, all sources agree that the military bent all efforts to first avoid and then to strictly limit its involvement in Bosnia to only tasks that could be considered strictly military, and that in the latter of these aims it was very successful.

The results of the U.S. policy process, the deployment of U.S. ground troops to the Balkans and the initial course of their operations is best seen through two types of sources. The first of these is, again, newspaper articles of the time. The U.S. commitment of ground troops to Bosnia was a matter of heated debate and as a result the

deployment itself was extensively covered. The second source is two documents produced by the U.S. Army, the after-action reviews of the U.S. Army's First Armored Division, the unit that was the lead U.S. unit to deploy to Bosnia, and of the Army's Seventh Corps, the higher headquarters of the First Armored Division. These lengthy documents were intended to capture the problems and successes of the deployment for use in similar future operations and the great majority of the information, such as that on logistics, transportation, and other purely military issues, is of little or no interest for this paper. But they do include some of the impressions of those participating in the operation on what it was they thought they were about and, just as importantly, what they thought they were not about and are useful for that reason. The most notable aspect of these is their recognition of the need for the military forces deployed to Bosnia to participate in the civil reconstruction after having successfully avoided any responsibility for doing so during the formulation of their mission in the U.S. government.

Though some of the works listed above have for their subject the general area of the impact of U.S. civil-military relations on the process of forming U.S. policy and some of them mention this impact on the formation of policy towards Bosnia, this paper will take this a step further and specifically examine the latter topic. Further, it will include the impact of the military's exercise of its influence on the accomplishment of U.S. policy in Bosnia. The U.S. military is still engaged in Bosnia; further, it is now undertaking missions at least roughly similar in Afghanistan and Iraq. For this reason the events examined in this paper remain important.

¹Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2000), vii, 1; Richard Holbrooke, *To*

End a War (New York: Random House, 1998; Modern Library Paperback, 1999), 21; Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995), vii.

²Andrew J. Bacevich and Richard H. Kohn, "Grand Army of the Republicans", *The New Republic*, Washington, 8 December 1997; Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, "The Gap", *National Interest*, Issue 61, Fall 2000.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The breakup of Yugoslavia was precipitated in large measure by economic problems associated with the close of the Cold War and the end of direct and indirect western economic subsidy of Yugoslavia. The end of these subsidies exposed structural economic problems within Yugoslavia, intensified the competition for control of resources and the political levers of that control, and provided the backdrop for the populist exploitation of historic ethnic grievances by political leaders.¹ These grievances, stretching back 600 years and more, were a critical component of the political conflict in that they were purposefully employed as highly inflammatory populist rhetoric to motivate the populace for the ensuing political and military struggle. This device was deliberately employed by Croat and especially Serb political leaders, and served to ensure that the breakup of Yugoslavia would be violent in the extreme. State-owned media outlets in each of the Yugoslav republics under the control of nationalist politicians engaged in a lengthy campaign of demonization of rival groups. That nationalist grievances were less important than other political objectives can be seen in the synchronization of Serb and Croat media messages against Bosnian Muslims after a likely agreement between Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic and Croat leader Franjo Tudjman over a planned partition of Bosnia between them. The Croat-Serb rivalry, contested hotly before this, faded for a time at the prospect of political and territorial gains at the expense of Bosnians.² The importance of the primacy of venal political

leaders, their use of nationalist ideas for political and material gain, and especially their employment of modern mass media cannot be overemphasized.

The competition for what economic resources remained to Yugoslavia broke down largely along the ethnic lines between the various nationalities. Generally speaking, the nationalities of the northern portion of Yugoslavia--the Slovenians, the Croats of Istria and Slavonia, and the Serbs and Hungarians of the Vojvodina--had been the economically most advanced. The Albanians, Montenegrins, Bosnian Muslims, Serbs of southern Serbia, and Croats of the Herzegovina region had lagged.³ The Yugoslav government of Tito had by various political and economic means managed to keep these economic differences under control. But at the end of the 1980s it was clear that the political and economic arrangement he had installed would not survive, and that the struggle to come to a new settlement might turn violent. In June 1991 the Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia both declared their independence. The Yugoslav government, left by the departure of the Slovenes and Croats in the hands of Serb nationalists, attempted to prevent the secession of the two republics. This led to desultory fighting in Slovenia between the new Slovenian Army and the Yugoslav People's Army (*Jugoslavenska Narodna Armija--JNA*), which lasted less than two weeks. However, since Croatia, unlike Slovenia, contained a significant minority population of Serbs, and because unity of all Serbs under one government was the major goal of the Serb nationalists in the rump Yugoslav government, fighting in Croatia was far more serious.

Bosnia was by far the most ethnically mixed of the Yugoslav republics. Bosnian Muslims (Bosniacs) made up a simple majority of the population of the republic, but both the Serb and Croat populations were nearly as large.⁴ The Bosniac-majority government

of the republic, apprehensive about living under the control of the Serb-dominated Yugoslav government, sought independence. The insistence of Bosnian Serbs that Bosnia remain within Yugoslavia was the immediate cause of the outbreak of fighting in Bosnia. Hardline Serb nationalists, pursuing the goal of one state for all Serbs, saw control of Bosnia as a critical link between the Serbs of the Krajina region along the Bosnia-Croatia border and the Serbian homeland. The Yugoslav government strongly supported the Bosnian Serbs, both materially and politically.⁵ Croat ultranationalists, who were every bit as intent on their political and national goals as the hardline Serbs, also desired control of Bosnia, which had Croat communities spread throughout its western, central, and northern portions.

Ethnic competition, though by far the most visible problem in Bosnia, was not the sole problem. Bosnia also contained the sharpest cultural and economic divisions of any of the former Yugoslav republics. In Bosnia, to a far greater degree than the other republics, there was a great divide between the cultural and economic life of cities such as Sarajevo, Mostar, Zenica, Banja Luka, and Tuzla, and the often backward life and outlook of the peasantry in the surrounding countryside. The cities were repositories of centuries of cultural and religious artifacts and monuments from all three of the major ethnic groups and had developed a relatively modern, cosmopolitan, café-style life. The population of the countryside had remained for the most part ethnically homogeneous and economically backward, often surviving in relative poverty on the basis of animal-driven agriculture.⁶ This difference created resentment amongst some of the peasantry towards city-dwellers, who were perceived, often rightly so, as looking down their noses at villagers. This is reflected in the Serbo-Croatian word "seljak", a pejorative much used in

Bosnia that translates literally as "villager" but would be more akin in the U.S. to "hillbilly" uttered with the contempt of a cosmopolite from New York or Los Angeles. Even within ethnic groups there were wide gaps. The Herzegovina region and the Croats who were the majority of its population were amongst the poorest in the former Yugoslavia, while the Croats of the Posavina region and of central Bosnia were relatively prosperous.

The complexity of the situation in Bosnia was reflected in the constantly shifting alliances throughout the fighting and the often multi-sided nature of the war there and its effects. Throughout the war, Serbs fought both Croats and Bosniacs. Some of the most fiercely contested fighting in the war was between Croats and Bosniacs, but when both sides perceived an advantage they joined forces against the Serbs. One of the central aims of the Serbs at the beginning of the war was to clear the left bank of the Drina River (the traditional boundary between Serbia and Bosnia) of non-Serbs, and do the same in a corridor that would link the Serbs of the Krajina with those in the Serbian homeland. In a process that became known as "ethnic cleansing," the Serbs sought to drive the majority Bosniac population from the left bank of the Drina River, whose opposite bank was Serbia. Later in the fighting, Croats began to cleanse areas of Herzegovina and central Bosnia of Bosniacs and Serbs. Croats and Serbs were also made homeless in various parts of the country, and moved en masse to areas in which they believed they would be safe. All of this created huge movements of refugees, people displaced from what often had been their families' homes for hundreds of years.

Ethnic cleansing not only drove people from their homes but very frequently subjected them purposefully and at great length to the worst atrocities. This set in train

large movements of people traumatized not only by losing their homes, but also by an indescribable human ordeal often inflicted on them by their neighbors or former friends. The problem of refugees, severe enough in itself, was therefore made more complex and highly charged both politically and emotionally. A significant portion of the refugees would never want to return to the scenes of their torment and would end up crowded into the cities of Bosnia, squatting in shelled-out apartments or homes, both unwilling and unable to return home.

The military situation throughout the war was a reflection of the complex nature of the overall problem. At the outset of the fighting, the Bosnian Serb Army (*Vojska Republika Srpska--VRS*) dominated. The VRS had been formed of Bosnian Serbs in the JNA, which itself became the Yugoslav Army (*Vojska Jugoslavia--VJ*). The VRS had inherited weapons, heavy equipment, and ammunition stored in Bosnia from the JNA. Under the Tito regime the plan to defend Yugoslavia had been to fall back to the geographically central republic of Bosnia and fight in the mountainous terrain there as partisans. The JNA had stored large quantities of military supplies there; the VRS inherited these stocks and began the war with an overwhelming superiority in material. The Bosniacs and the Croats, though, proved resilient. The newly formed Bosniac Army was especially resource poor, but, as the Bosniacs knew what probably awaited them if they surrendered to the VRS, they fought doggedly. The Croats, too, resisted the Serbs quite fiercely. This was in part due to the extremely low morale of the VRS, which had a constant problem with desertions and, aside from the use of its artillery and the main guns of its tanks, was often militarily ineffective.⁷

Military action was often more involved than one of the ethnic militaries fighting with or against one or more of the others. There were many episodes of local, unofficial cooperation, particularly for financial gain. For instance, a sort of implicit cooperation existed during the siege of Sarajevo, when Serbs turned a blind eye to (and a profit from) relief supplies moving from the Adriatic coast to Sarajevo, often in cooperation with Croats and profiteering Muslims from Sarajevo. Occasionally two units would fight one another one day, cooperate against a third 'enemy' unit the next, only to return finally to fighting one another.⁸ Herzegovina, before the war one of the poorest areas of Bosnia, ended the war as one of the richest, in part due to the profits made from fees in kind assessed on relief convoys allowed to pass through the area on the way to their sometime 'enemies' in Sarajevo.⁹ And in the northwest region of Bosnia around Bihac, a Bosniac army independent of the Bosniac government in Sarajevo and backed by the Serbs fought against other Bosniacs and against Croats for control of the area.¹⁰

What is important to remember is that the descent into violence in the former Yugoslavia was not inevitable. Many other nations in Europe and around the world have histories of ethnic conflict and a mix of ethnic groups, yet do not explode into the terrible atrocities seen in the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. Ethnic conflicts were not the cause of the problems in Yugoslavia but rather the result of economic and political problems. They were a tool used for personal political ends by a particularly unscrupulous cadre of politicians.¹¹

¹Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 15.

²Warren Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe* (New York: Times Books, 1996; Times Books, 1999), 117.

³Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 53 (figures); Christopher Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course, and Consequences* (London: C. Hurst and Co., 1995; C. Hurst and Co., 1998), 69.

⁴Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 2000), 27.

⁵Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia*, 74.

⁶Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia*, 29-33.

⁷Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth, and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 230; Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia*, 137

⁸Judah, *The Serbs*, 247-252.

⁹Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995; Penguin Books, 1996), 295.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 306.

¹¹Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 18.

CHAPTER 3

THE COURSE OF THE U.S. POLITICAL DEBATE

Serious U.S. involvement in the breakup of the former Yugoslavia began with the 21 June 1991 trip to Belgrade of then U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. The trip seems to have been something of an afterthought. Other events, particularly the recently ended Gulf War and its aftermath and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, were engaging the attention of the U.S. government.

Baker traveled to Belgrade because intra-Yugoslav disputes which had been festering for the past few years were threatening to break out into open warfare. A Croat politician, Stipe Mesic, was due to assume the federal presidency of Yugoslavia, which rotated amongst the Yugoslav republics. Mesic's assumption of the presidency was being blocked by Slobodan Milosevic, at that time the leader of the Serb republic. This was a threat to the functioning Yugoslav constitution and would certainly lead to the secession of Slovenia and Croatia. The secession of these two republics would in turn provide an excuse for the intervention of the Serb-dominated Yugoslav People's Army (Jugoslavenske Narodne Armija - JNA) in an attempt to hold Yugoslavia together under Milosevic's terms.

Baker's visit was an effort to forestall the outbreak of a Yugoslav civil war. Baker himself was not optimistic. He later stated that he knew "full-well that we had very little chance of succeeding," but that if some show of effort in the matter was not made, the U.S. would be blamed for not even trying.¹ The underlying U.S. position was that Yugoslav unity ought to be maintained, as dissolution of Yugoslavia could not be

accomplished without the outbreak of extremely violent conflict, a position that also had the strong support of France and Germany. This was in part a reflection of the concern that the breakup of Yugoslavia could set a precedent that might undermine stability in the Soviet Union, another multi-ethnic state that was beginning to have problems.² Events would prove, though, that absent a clear, strong, and confidently presented message from the U.S., the situation was ripe for an outburst of fighting.

Baker conducted eleven meetings that day, speaking with each of the presidents of the Yugoslav republics, and also with various members of the federal government. His most important meeting was certainly with Milosevic. Though Milosevic was only one of five republican presidents, he was the face of and driving force behind the Serbian nationalist movement that dominated the federal government and the JNA leadership. This dominance, along with the conduct of Milosevic and other Serb nationalists, was a major reason the other republics were moving towards secession from Yugoslavia.

Baker told Milosevic that the U.S. regarded Milosevic's actions and policies as the main cause of the ongoing crisis in Yugoslavia, and believed that these actions and policies were driving the situation towards violent confrontation. The U.S. rejected any claim by Serbia to territory outside the current borders of the Serbian republic regardless of whether or not this resulted in Serbs living outside the borders of the Serbian republic. Further, Baker castigated Milosevic for aggravating ethnic problems for his own political purposes, denying political and civil rights to Albanians in Kosovo, obstructing the accession of Mesic to the federal presidency, and undermining the functioning of the federal constitution.³ Interestingly, Baker's personal assessment of Milosevic was that he was "a tough and a liar" and that "like most toughs . . . he respected power."⁴ U.S.

Ambassador to Yugoslavia Warren Zimmerman, who met with Milosevic more than perhaps any other U.S. official until Richard Holbrooke, shared this assessment.⁵

In his meetings with the presidents of the other republics, Baker's message was that the U.S. government would not recognize unilateral declarations of independence from any of the republics. At the same time, though, he stated that the U.S. did support the right of self-determination of the various nationalities in Yugoslavia. Along with all this, Baker communicated the position that the U.S. held use of force in the furtherance of either Yugoslav unity or secession to be unacceptable.⁶ Three days after Baker's visit, Slovenia seceded; two days later JNA units crossed into Slovenia.

Baker had presented a series of mixed messages to the Yugoslav leadership during his visit. On the one hand, he had expressed U.S. support for Yugoslav unity and rejected the idea of the republics seceding unilaterally; on the other he had disapproved of the use of force to maintain Yugoslav unity and given his approval to the idea of self-determination. It was inevitable that, given these contradictory positions, each party to the conflict would reach conclusions consonant with their prior goals. The most important conclusion drawn was that of the leadership of the JNA. They heard Baker's emphasis on Yugoslav unity most clearly and decided that the U.S. and the international community would back intervention. They and the leadership of the federal government therefore decided upon using the JNA against Slovenia.⁷

This to some degree was surely the result of a miscalculation on the part of the U.S. Neither Slovenian succession nor JNA intervention were the outcome desired by the U.S., and the more prescient observers at the time predicted that the secession of both Slovenia and Croatia would later lead to much greater violence. Both the Bosnian

president Alia Izetbegovic and Kiro Gligorov of Macedonia told Baker during their meetings with him that this would be the case.⁸ In part, the distraction of U.S. policy makers by other events around the world probably played a role. But the U.S. government also was of more than one mind on the problem of Yugoslavia. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft had previously served in Belgrade as U.S. Ambassador and military attaché, respectively. The two of them were the officials within the Bush administration foreign policy team who were most worried about Yugoslavia. The two principals on that team, Bush and Baker, did not understand the potential for trouble in the Balkans and lacked interest. Scowcroft relates that "Baker would say 'We don't have a dog in this fight'. The President would say . . . once a week 'Tell me again what this is all about?'"⁹ This lack of focus and desire to think the problem through ensured that at this stage any American intervention in the former Yugoslavia would be ineffective.

Until the following year and the U.S. presidential campaign season, neither U.S. domestic political considerations nor public opinion provided any strong impetus towards detailed consideration of the problem of Yugoslavia. International considerations at first mitigated against the U.S. taking a leading role in trying to find a solution. As Yugoslavia was breaking up, western European nations were in the process of forming the European Union. The problems presented by the dissolution of Yugoslavia would be the first test of the European Union, and European diplomats tackled it eagerly. As Slovenia was seceding and the JNA was intervening in Slovenia, a prominent European diplomat announced that "The hour of Europe has dawned."¹⁰ One U.S. official stated that European governments ought to "define the distance and set the pace for the

international community in dealing with Yugoslavia."¹¹ European Union diplomats made great efforts to find a formula ending the fighting, but were unsuccessful. In part this was because the diplomats involved did not understand the issues involved, failed to realize that the parties involved actually had rational motives for resorting to force, and were overmatched as individual politicians by the capable, astute, and ruthless Slobodan Milosevic.¹² It was also because the various European governments had not come to agreement amongst themselves on what their policy should be. At the beginning of the European efforts to end the fighting, their policy was approximately the same as that of the U.S.: that Yugoslav unity should be preserved, and that declarations of independence would not be recognized. This policy, however, lasted for only a short time. Less than three weeks after Baker's visit to Belgrade, Germany broke with this policy and, against the wishes of the U.S. and the other European states, began to campaign for the recognition of Croatia's independence. This episode and many others over the following months and years would demonstrate repeatedly and conclusively that the European countries had neither the will nor the unity to effectively deal with the breakup of Yugoslavia and that, in this area at least, Europe's hour had not dawned. The only area of agreement amongst the European leadership was on an arms embargo imposed upon the entirety of the former Yugoslavia. This measure was taken as Croat forces began to employ heavy weapons taken from JNA bases in Croatia in counterattacks against JNA forces. The intent was to control the spread of the fighting. The actual effect was to give the advantage in the fighting to the JNA, which was already heavily armed, and to put the most unarmed groups throughout all the republics, particularly the Bosnian Muslims, at an extreme disadvantage.¹³ This embargo would become amongst the most contentious

issues both in Europe and the U.S. in the search for a solution to the coming conflict in Bosnia.

In the U.S., the indifference and incomprehension of the Bush administration gradually gave way to a desire to do something about the spreading conflict in Yugoslavia, though 'something' was meant to be as modest as possible. In part this grew from a desire to forestall potential criticism of the administration in the impending presidential campaign season. President Bush in mid-1992 decided that as far as concrete U.S. action in the region, the U.S. would limit itself to participating only in support of UN-sanctioned humanitarian relief operations. Though this might not have been entirely apparent at the time, it is now obvious that Milosevic and the Serbs took full advantage of the reluctance to become engaged and the confusion that existed in Washington and all the European capitals.

The U.S. presidential campaign of 1992 highlighted the confusion within the U.S. over the issue of the breakup of Yugoslavia. In the midst of the campaign, in late July, Roy Gutman, a reporter for New York Newsday, discovered Serb-run detention camps in Bosnia that contained Muslim men and boys in conditions that called to mind the concentration camps of World War II. At the time Bosnian-Serb leader Radovan Karadzic was in London for talks on Bosnia sponsored by the European Community. Karadzic, a fluent English speaker, when confronted with this story, challenged the Western media to come to Bosnia, saying that there were no such camps in Bosnia. Reporters from the British television network ITN and the Manchester Guardian did just this, returning within weeks with graphic footage and print stories on the Bosnian Serb detention center at Omarska, Keraterm, and other locations within Bosnia.¹⁴

These and other reports of atrocities perpetrated in Bosnia led to calls from Bush's Democratic opponent in the presidential election, Bill Clinton, for a more forceful U.S. stand against the ongoing atrocities in Bosnia. As the reports and news footage from Bosnia were publicized by the U.S. media, Clinton and his running mate Senator Al Gore stated that the bloodshed in Bosnia was beginning to resemble the campaign to exterminate the Jews during World War II. "We may have to use military force," said Clinton at a campaign rally, continuing on to say, "I would begin with air power against the Serbs to try to restore the basic conditions of humanity."¹⁵ At the same time, a bipartisan group of senators including Gore, the Democratic majority leader George Mitchell, and minority leader Robert Dole sponsored a non-binding resolution calling on Bush to seek UN Security Council authorization for the use of military force to enforce the delivery of humanitarian relief by the UN and to guarantee access by international observers to the detention camps. This resolution was not passed, though, largely due to objections raised by Senator John Warner, the ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee. Warner said that such a resolution would in effect be a "blank check to the UN" and that military experts felt that it might be the first step in the commitment of U.S. ground forces.¹⁶

After this, the rhetoric of President Bush and his administration on the subject began to become much more forceful. Within days Bush demanded access for the international community to the Bosnian detention camps, insisting that he did so not in response to the various calls for firmer action but out of humanitarian concern. But at the same time, Bush expressed his reluctance to authorize the use of force. In spite of this reluctance, the positions of the two candidates were in reality not all that far apart.

According to his campaign rhetoric, Clinton was more willing than Bush to consider the use of military forces to redress the situation in Bosnia, but both candidates held that this should only be with the concurrence of the UN and as a part of a multinational effort.¹⁷ Both candidates' positions remained more or less the same through the remainder of the campaign. Though the reports of atrocities and footage of detention camps continued to gain the attention of the U.S. public throughout the fall, the issue of Bosnia was a minor one in a campaign dominated by domestic and economic issues.

The debate within the U.S. Congress and on the presidential campaign trail made clear that the positions of the U.S. political leadership were not strictly a matter of political affiliation and that the debate cut across party lines. However, it was generally true that politicians from the center and left of the political spectrum were more likely to support U.S. military involvement in the Balkans than more conservative politicians. Democrats were also somewhat more likely to support military intervention, though one of the most prominent voices for an increasing U.S. role was Republican Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole.¹⁸ In particular some observers noted that Democratic Party leaders, including many who had opposed past U.S. military actions, were amongst the most ardent supporters of U.S. intervention in the Balkans. Some writers were quick to note that while still a candidate Clinton had simultaneously been forced to deal with charges that he avoided military service during that Vietnam War and advocated robust U.S. involvement in the Balkans.

As the new Clinton administration assumed office, the divisions over Bosnia within the U.S. policy establishment showed no signs of abating. Outgoing Bush administration officials, frustrated by the ongoing fighting and atrocities, began to temper

their objections to the use of military force and U.S. intervention in Bosnia. Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, who had taken the place of James Baker in August of 1992, said on 19 December 1992 that the Bush administration in its last few weeks in office was very strongly considering shifting its position from outright opposition to any military involvement in the region to a more activist stance. Though his administration was about to hand over responsibility to the new one, Eagleburger stated that the situation in Bosnia was not one to be left to sit for the Clinton administration. Until shortly before this point, Eagleburger had been amongst the most outspoken figures in the Bush administration opposing U.S. military involvement in the region, publicly wondering whether the U.S. had the ability to affect the outcome of the conflict. One great change in policy was Eagleburger's public naming of Serb leaders Milosevic, Radovan Karadzic, and Ratko Mladic as possible war criminals who ought to be held accountable for the possible commission in Bosnia of "crimes against humanity."¹⁹ Eagleburger's most significant initiative was to suggest that the Bush administration might support the commencement of air operations to enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia authorized in UN Security Council Resolution 781 of October 1992. To this point the no-fly zone had not been enforced due to U.S. refusal to authorize NATO military involvement in this, most recently in December of 1992.

As the Bush administration left office, it left U.S. policy towards the Balkans and Bosnia suspended between two poles. The first was a desire to avoid entanglement in what was seen as a "quagmire" and to leave resolution of the problem to European governments. What was especially firm was the determination to avoid the commitment of any military force. This determination on the part of some members of the

administration was so pronounced that at one point individual military members were forbidden to enter the territory of the former Yugoslavia without the express approval of Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney.²⁰ At the other pole was the desire to do something about the ongoing killing and the humanitarian crisis in Bosnia. There were two reasons for this. One of these was purely political: the desire to remove a divisive and emotional issue from the table at the time President Bush was running for re-election. But within the Bush administration many also were simply horrified by the reports of mass murder and rape, ethnic cleansing, and humanitarian disaster coming from the conflict, which was certainly a large part of the motivation behind Eagleburger's shift in position in late December 1992. James Baker remembers that one of the meetings on Bosnia he attended was, because of the emotions the subject raised, "one of the most spirited I ever attended."²¹ President Bush himself was emblematic of the tension within his administration. While often stating his reluctance to allow U.S. involvement or intervention in the situation, he could at the same time express his concern for soldiers of other nations deployed in Bosnia as a part of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) responsible for ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid. These soldiers, Bush remarked, were "doing the Lord's work", a comment surely reflective of Bush's personal feelings about the conflict.²²

One of President Clinton's first actions after taking office was to direct a comprehensive review of U.S. policy towards Bosnia. The intention was to formulate concrete policy options that would flesh out the rhetoric of the 1992 campaign and provide some basis for specific and more aggressive actions. Amongst the options considered were beginning enforcement of the no-fly zone specified in U.N. resolutions,

ordering air strikes against Bosnian Serb artillery units and aircraft, lifting the U.N. arms embargo to allow the Bosnian Muslims to acquire more and heavier weaponry, and creating a tribunal to investigate the allegations of war crimes that had come out of the Bosnian conflict.²³

The results of this review were discussed at a series of three meetings of the Principals Committee (PC) beginning in late January 1993. The PC members were National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, United Nations Ambassador Madeleine Albright, Director of Central Intelligence James Woolsey, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, who was the only figure remaining from the Bush national security team. Clinton and Vice President Al Gore joined the principals for the third meeting on 5 February 1993. Amongst the conclusions reached at this meeting were three that would give broad shape to American policy and actions towards Bosnia over the next few years. The first of these was that the U.S. would not force a settlement on the contending parties in Bosnia but rather would only support one that was voluntarily accepted by all. Second, the no-fly zone would be enforced as a means to reduce the violence in Bosnia. And third, the U.S. would offer ground troops to implement and enforce any peace agreement reached with the concurrence of all parties involved.²⁴

At the same time as the new U.S. administration was attempting to come to grips with the matter, new initiatives to resolve the Bosnian conflict were being floated under UN and European auspices. In the wake of an intensification of military action in eastern Bosnia on the part of the Serbs, existing European Community economic sanctions against Serbia were supplemented by further UN sanctions in April 1993. These

additions included the freezing of Yugoslav assets abroad and the prohibition of transshipments across Serbia or Montenegro. These sanctions were at the time the strongest that had ever been imposed by the UN.²⁵

The major new initiative at this point was the so-called Vance-Owen plan. Working together, Lord David Owen, a former British Foreign Secretary, and former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance had been working for about a year on behalf of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY), a group formed by the European Union and UN to seek a solution to the problem. Vance and Owen had formulated a plan to bring an end to the fighting in Bosnia. This plan called for the division of Bosnia into ten provinces, three of which would be Serb, three Muslim, two Croat, one Muslim-Croat, and Sarajevo, which would be jointly administered. Provinces would be given fairly broad autonomy. The plan, however, gave these provinces no international standing, reserving the power of national sovereignty for a central government in Sarajevo. The Bosnian Croats accepted Vance-Owen enthusiastically, as the two Bosnian Croat provinces envisaged gave them more territory than they might have expected based on the size of their population. Further, the designated Croat provinces all abutted onto Croatia proper. The Bosnian Muslims proved reluctant to accept the plan, seeing it as accepting the results of Serb ethnic cleansing and a formalization of partition of the country. Milosevic and the Serbian government, after insisting on some modifications to the original plan that weakened the power of the central government, accepted it. However, the Bosnian Serbs, in spite of intense pressure from Milosevic, refused to accept it, not willing to give up territory that they had won control of through military means. In any event, the plan was probably unworkable in

that it included no mechanism for implementation of its provisions, nor did it provide for enforcement.²⁶ It was another in a series of efforts by the international community to force the contenders in Bosnia to do something they did not want to do without the commitment of any means of compulsion. The Vance-Owen plan also had one unintended side effect. This was the breaking up of the Muslim-Croat alliance. In the face of the initial Serb attacks, the Muslims and Croats had formed an alliance of convenience and necessity. The Vance-Owen plan fell right into the area in which the interests of the Muslims and the Croats diverged, the Croats being most concerned with their status as a constituent nation of Bosnia and the Muslims with the integrity of Bosnia. The split between them turned quickly violent and resulted in fighting in Herzegovina, central Bosnia, and especially in Mostar that was amongst the most intense and brutal of any that occurred during the Bosnian war.²⁷

The Vance-Owen plan was largely deemed unacceptable by the Clinton administration. Its main flaw was seen as its de facto acceptance of territory gained by the Bosnian Serbs through military action and of ethnic partition. It was also seen as very difficult to implement and unenforceable. In response to the Vance-Owen plan and as a product of the PC meetings, Secretary of State Christopher announced a six-point plan in February of 1993. Though it did specify that the U.S. would seek further tightening of economic sanctions and political pressure on Serbia, the other points of Christopher's plan were half-hearted at best. Christopher stated that the U.S. would begin to participate in the ICFY process, that the president would use his good offices to inform all three parties that the only way to end the fighting was through negotiation, that the U.S. would address humanitarian needs, and that the U.S. would consult closely with its allies and

with Russia. The final point was that the U.S. would help with implementation of an agreement with "possible U.S. military participation."²⁸

Aside from the tightening of economic sanctions on Serbia, which had already shown some result, these ideas were neither new nor likely to have much efficacy, especially as U.S. military participation was mentioned, even in the event of an acceptable agreement, as merely 'possible'. As the ongoing contentious discussions in the U.S. over the use of the military in Bosnia were well known, this possibility of military involvement was probably of no account in the calculations of anyone involved; the de facto ruling out of U.S. military involvement (which will be discussed in further detail later) was perhaps the most important factor in the ultimate failure of the Vance-Owen plan. This pronouncement pointedly lacked any mention of air strikes, and was in no way an indication that the Clinton administration itself was prepared to do anything concrete on the matter or assert U.S. leadership.

The problem for policymakers in the Clinton administration was the same as it had been for their predecessors in the Bush administration. Though several in the Clinton administration, notably Al Gore, Madeleine Albright, and Anthony Lake, were in favor of a more aggressive U.S. position on the issue, others--including the President himself--were at least as interested in setting limits to any involvement, limits that were especially strict in the area of any possible employment of the U.S. military. As we will see, these limits were largely set by the military itself and were crucial in setting the terms of discussion and the eventual outcome. The Clinton administration, like the Bush administration before it, was caught between the two poles of desiring to do something to end the killing and desiring to avoid any entanglements.

After some further debate and for lack of a better option, the Clinton administration decided in the spring of 1993 to back the Vance-Owen plan. The Bosnian Muslims, likely convinced by Christopher's February statement that the U.S. would help implement and enforce the plan if it were agreed to by all parties, also signed onto the plan. Milosevic, feeling pressure from the economic sanctions against Serbia and having gained further concessions in the plan from Lord Owen, also agreed to the Vance-Owen plan.²⁹ The Bosnian Serbs, in spite of being subjected to intense pressure from Milosevic and European leaders at a conference in Athens and threatened with NATO airstrikes, did not agree to the Vance-Owen plan. The Bosnia Serb parliament unanimously rejected the plan, responding to a campaign against it conducted in the Bosnian Serb media by Bosnia Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his allies. This was a humiliating defeat for Milosevic and his first political defeat since his rise to the leadership of Serbia almost six years previously.³⁰

While these events were occurring, dissatisfaction with the Vance-Owen plan in Washington was leading towards a new policy. Some policy makers, desiring to change the situation on the ground in Bosnia but unable to sell the idea of direct U.S. intervention within the administration, began to push the idea of lifting the arms embargo on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. As Serbia was under European Union and UN sanctions and the Croats and particularly the Muslims, for whose benefit the embargo would be lifted, were heavily outgunned by the Bosnian Serbs, this option was seen as a way to even the balance of forces in the conflict and present the Serbs with a threat to accompany future negotiation initiatives. To enable the Muslims to have some breathing space in which to arm and then train themselves, the lifting of the embargo would be

accompanied by NATO air strikes to turn back any Serb attempt to take advantage of the situation. This idea, which became known as 'lift and strike', had the support of most of Clinton's senior advisors. This included General Powell, who believed that strengthened Muslim ground forces would force Serb forces to mass and render air strikes more effective, and that more importantly 'lift and strike' would forestall the need for the use of U.S. ground troops.³¹ This strategy was adopted after a lengthy meeting between Clinton and his foreign policy team on 1 May 1993.³²

Christopher then was given the task of convincing U.S. allies to accept the end of the arms embargo. As these nations had troops in Bosnia already who would be vulnerable to retaliation, they had already firmly rejected this idea. Persuading them to reverse themselves was an obviously questionable proposition, especially given the U.S. reluctance to commit its own ground forces. Though the Europeans knew that their policy was not working, they were not happy to be told so by the U.S. while the U.S. at the same time refused to accept any risk at all, especially those associated with a military commitment. European resentment had also been stoked by the use of strident rhetoric on Bosnia by the Clinton campaign the year before, rhetoric that had not been helpful and that certainly was not matched by policy initiatives now that Clinton was in office.³³ Additionally, Christopher's instructions were to take a conciliatory approach with the allies, presenting lift and strike only as the best option available and asking for allied support. What he did not do was to announce to the allies that this was the U.S. policy and assert U.S. leadership on the issue.³⁴ The reason for this approach was likely that if the U.S. took this kind of lead, pushed through the lifting of the embargo and led NATO air strikes, Bosnia would then be a U.S. problem, something that the Clinton

administration for all its rhetoric during the presidential election campaign was still trying to avoid.³⁵ In addition to the problems with the policy itself, administration officials had not even bothered to research the history of the issue within the U.S. government. When the military representative on Christopher's trip, Lieutenant General Barry McCaffrey, told Christopher's assistants of a trip he had taken a few months before with Lawrence Eagleburger to meet with the same Europeans and discuss a similar policy initiative, they knew nothing about it and asked McCaffrey to tell them how it had gone. In the event, none of the European nations were willing to accept lift and strike, and Christopher returned to the U.S. without having made any progress towards ending the violence in Bosnia. The failure of this trip and the perception amongst Clinton administration officials that they had won office on their promise to pay more attention to domestic matters led the administration to become much more aggressive on the issue of Bosnia.³⁶ It would remain so for nearly two years until events forced the search for a workable policy.

Failure of the Vance-Owen plan and the unwillingness of U.S. allies to accept lift and strike left very little upon which all the outside parties concerned with Bosnia could agree to move forward. The remaining threads of commonality were brought together in an arrangement known as the Joint Action Plan, which was agreed to by the U.S., Great Britain, France, Spain, and Russia. Its main feature was a commitment to protect six so-called 'safe areas' that had been designated as refuges for Muslims from Serb military action. Attacks on UN peacekeepers guarding the safe areas - but not on the safe areas themselves - would be answered by NATO air strikes. The UN and NATO would both be required to approve any air strike. Two of the safe areas, Srebrenica and Gorazde,

were squarely in the area most coveted by the Bosnian Serbs, the western bank of the Drina River. The conflict around these two areas was to be unceasingly intense and would ultimately be the spur that brought definitive U.S. military involvement. The safe areas became contentious almost immediately. Muslims used several of them as protected military bases and launched raids and other military actions from them. The Joint Action Plan, however, was more immediately notable for what it did not do. It made no mention whatsoever of rolling back either the gains made from Bosnian Serb military action or the results of ethnic cleansing. It did nothing to attempt to stop the violence and was a turn by the Clinton administration from the idea of reversing Serb gains to containment of the conflict and some degree of relief from the worst of the violence.³⁷

The reaction in Congress to these events demonstrated that the passing of the earlier election season had done nothing to reduce the divisions in Congress over the subject of Bosnia. There were still deep differences, and these still ran across party lines. The debate in Congress had, if anything, become more emotional. Those in favor of intervention and those opposed each used powerful, emotional historical analogies to make their cases. Many interventionists likened the events in Bosnia to the Holocaust and felt a moral imperative to intervene and halt the killing. Those opposed to intervention were worried lest the U.S. become tangled in another Vietnam. Senator John McCain, who opposed intervention, said that "there is an understandable guilt we all feel about having done nothing to stop the Holocaust, but there is also the question of whether there is a viable U.S. involvement that will bring about what we want to achieve."³⁸

The Joint Action Plan brought Clinton criticism from Congressional members of both parties. Senator Daniel Moynihan said that the plan was "legitimizing genocide", while Senator Dole stated that it was the same as "writing off Bosnia." Dole urged Clinton to lift the arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia regardless of the opinions of Europeans or of Russia. Clinton administration officials maintained that while their short-term goal had changed to a more modest one of stopping ethnic cleansing, the long-range goal of ensuring that Serb territorial gains were not sanctioned remained the same.³⁹ While various negotiation initiatives through the summer of 1993 seemed to be making progress, there was also intense debate in Congress over implementing the Clinton policy of employing U.S. ground troops to help implement a peace agreement agreed upon by both parties. Senator Dole, who seems to have been emblematic of much of the division over U.S. policy towards Bosnia, stated that Clinton would need to convince Congress to authorize such a deployment and expressed his personal doubts about it.⁴⁰ Within just a few weeks of this, however, Dole sharply criticized the Clinton policy based on the Joint Action Plan, accusing the Clinton administration of abdicating U.S. leadership while hiding behind multilateralism and of letting European allies, Russia, and the UN veto U.S. policy.⁴¹

A little more than a year after the violence in Bosnia had come sharply to U.S. public attention with the reports of atrocities there, U.S. policy had basically not moved. The scale and horrific nature of the violence in Bosnia seemed to call for a reaction on the part of the U.S. After the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union there was no other nation with the prestige or power to marshal allies, provide direction, or exert influence backed by anything other than rhetoric. The Bush

administration had struggled with the moral dilemma presented by Bosnia, trying to match the level of moral outrage to a perceived national interest in order to formulate specific, concrete actions to deal with the problem. Doing so in a matter of a few months in the middle of a presidential election campaign proved to be too much.

As a candidate, President Clinton had forcefully argued for a robust U.S. response when faced with the mounting evidence of atrocities in Bosnia, and upon taking office his foreign policy advisors made consideration of alternatives amongst their first orders of business. But in the fall of 1993, the Clinton administration found itself not far from where it had started, nor, for that matter, all that far from where the Bush administration had started. The moral dilemma and outrage presented by Bosnia ran up against the same considerations of national interest and political support for military action that had dogged the U.S. foreign policy apparatus from the beginning. This tension kept U.S. policy all but suspended in place until mid-1995 and the beginning of the process that led to the Dayton agreement.

Throughout this time, western and UN policy in Bosnia suffered a series of humiliations at the hands of the Bosnian Serbs. A pattern set in of Serb military action followed by international threats, some kind of half-hearted action, and a partial Serb climb-down. Often the international threats of action would be countered by threats from the Bosnian Serbs of ending all talks and of a total bloodbath, playing on the fears of the countries that did have troops in Bosnia as a part of the UN peacekeeping mission.⁴² The NATO countries found themselves during this period in much the same position as the U.S. They wanted to see the violence in Bosnia stop, but were willing neither to make

the commitments necessary nor to come to any consensus amongst themselves as to the shape a solution ought to take.

This situation changed to some degree in early 1994. On 5 February 1994 a single mortar round landed in a crowded Sarajevo marketplace, killed 69 people and wounded 200 more. This one round seemed in the political arena to have as much effect as all of the other 500,000 fired into Sarajevo over the course of the Bosnian war combined. The incident was prominently featured in U.S. and European media reports. There was some dispute over whether the round was fired by the Serb besiegers of Sarajevo or by Muslim forces in an effort to garner international sympathy. Though the matter was never definitively settled,⁴³ the weight of opinion outside Bosnia, perhaps in part because the incident occurred at the end of a month-long period of intense shelling of the city, blamed the Serbs. The outrage in Europe and the U.S. galvanized NATO into giving the Serbs a deadline by which they were to move all their heavy weapons out of range of Sarajevo and to locations at which they could be accounted for by UNPROFOR inspectors. If this were not done, NATO promised air strikes on Serb positions around Sarajevo. Though the Serbs complied with this demand, the concrete threat of air strikes was the beginning of a more active role for NATO and particularly for the U.S., which would have carried the major burden of such a mission. Two months later, in April 1994, NATO actually carried out air strikes in defense of the UN safe area of Gorazde after Serb attacks. These air strikes consisted of two sorties on each of two successive days that were all flown by U.S. aircraft. Though these and further limited air strikes were of limited effectiveness and were of little import to the situation on the ground, they were another step in the gradual deepening of U.S. involvement.⁴⁴

A second factor also changed the dynamic of the situation. This was the signing of agreements to end two other conflicts in the region. One of these was the Washington agreement of February 1993 that ended the fighting between the Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats, creating a Croat-Muslim federation, enabling a joining of forces against the Bosnian Serbs. This agreement was a direct result of intense U.S. pressure against the government of Croatia, which after the Bosnian Croats and Muslims had fallen out sent the Croatian Army across the Bosnian border to join Croat areas of Bosnia to Croatia by force.⁴⁵ The second of these agreements was for a cease-fire within Croatia between the Croatian government and Serbs living in the Krajina region of Croatia. In the negotiations leading to this agreement, the U.S. had played a key role along with Russia.⁴⁶ Though the settlement between the Croats and the Krajina Serbs would last only two years, its importance lay in the prominent role of the U.S. and its increasing influence in Croatia and the region. The Washington agreement was a product solely of U.S. diplomacy. These agreements demonstrated that U.S. leadership was essential in solving problems in the region and like the air strikes, a further sign of increasing U.S. engagement in the region.

At this point, the U.S. began to emerge as the leader in dealing with the Bosnian problem. This leadership would develop in fits and starts. U.S. leadership would be hamstrung by the intense disagreement within the U.S. government over the question of military involvement in Bosnia, especially over the commitment of ground troops. In fact, the debate over Bosnia would largely come to consist of the debate over whether or not to employ the U.S. military.⁴⁷ These disagreements were not only between Congress and the administration but also within the administration itself. The inability to settle

these disagreements in either the Bush or the Clinton administrations created a vacuum of policy and leadership on this issue. Further, while U.S. policy on Bosnia gradually changed, there was no corresponding change in the U.S. policy on military intervention in Bosnia.⁴⁸ The combination of the terms of the debate being primarily over the issue of military involvement and of the failure of the policy-making apparatus to provide guidance meant that the leadership of the military would have great sway in the framing of alternatives to deal with the situation, and therefore in the creation of the overall policy and the setting of conditions for employing military means in pursuit of policy goals.

¹Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 150.

²Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 164.

³Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe*, 133-134.

⁴James A. Baker III, *The Politics of Diplomacy* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), 481.

⁵Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe*, 21-27.

⁶Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 481-483; Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 151.

⁷Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*, 156.

⁸Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe*, 136.

⁹Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 201.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 159.

¹¹Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 200-201.

¹²*Ibid.*, 159-162.

¹³*Ibid.*, 85.

- ¹⁴Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 248-250.
- ¹⁵Sam Fullwood, "Clinton Steps Up His Support for Military Action in Bosnia," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 August 1992, 8.
- ¹⁶Don Oberdorfer and Helen Dewar, "Clinton, Senators Urge Bush to Act on Balkans," *Washington Post*, 6 August 1992, A01.
- ¹⁷Don Oberdorfer, "On Global Matters, Two Candidates' Positions are Mostly in Synchrony," *Washington Post*, 29 September 1992, A07.
- ¹⁸Don Oberdorfer and Helen Dewar, "Clinton, Senators Urge Bush to Act".
- ¹⁹Don Oberdorfer, "Eagleburger's Last Lap," *Washington Post*, 20 December 1992, C01.
- ²⁰Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe*, 219.
- ²¹Baker, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, 649.
- ²²"Victory for War", *The Economist*, 26 December 1992/8 January 1993, 61.
- ²³Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 8.
- ²⁴*Ibid.*, 9-10.
- ²⁵Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 196 and 276.
- ²⁶*Ibid.*, 276-286; Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 221-230.
- ²⁷Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*, 198-201.
- ²⁸Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 233-4.
- ²⁹*Ibid.*, 243-245.
- ³⁰Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 284-287; Shoup and Burg, *The War in Bosnia Herzegovina*, 249.
- ³¹Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 15.
- ³²*Ibid.*, 15; Shoup and Burg, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 251.
- ³³David Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 225.

- ³⁴Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 16.
- ³⁵Shoup and Burg, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 252.
- ³⁶Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, 229.
- ³⁷Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 18-19.
- ³⁸Helen Dewar, "Congress Torn Over Balkan Role," *Washington Post*, 29 April 1993, A01.
- ³⁹William Claiborne "Critics From Both Parties Hit Clinton on Bosnia Plan," *Washington Post*, 24 May 1993, A15.
- ⁴⁰Michael Ross, "White House Faces Test on Bosnia Troops Strategy," *Los Angeles Times*, 25 September 1993.
- ⁴¹William Claiborne, "Dole Decries U.S. Bosnia Policy," *Washington Post*, 18 August 1993, A25.
- ⁴²Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 304-305.
- ⁴³Shoup and Burg, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 166.
- ⁴⁴Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 327-328; Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 314.
- ⁴⁵Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 322.
- ⁴⁶Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 314.
- ⁴⁷Susan L. Woodward, "Upside-Down Policy: The Debate on the Use of Force and the Case of Bosnia," in *The Use of Force After the Cold War*, ed. H.W. Brands (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 123.
- ⁴⁸Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 397-398.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF THE U.S. MILITARY IN THE DEBATE

The respect normally accorded the U.S. military and its leaders was greatly enhanced by the spectacular military success of the Gulf War. This increased respect had the effect of giving the opinions of military leaders great weight. In light of the policy deadlock over Bosnia amongst the other elements of the national security apparatus, this would turn out to be especially true in regards to that problem.

Even before the success of the Gulf War, the military had begun over a period of several years to become more politically influential and active. Various surveys of military personnel have identified a trend within the military of increasing identification with the Republican Party, showing a years-long change from the pointedly apolitical stance of senior military officers of the World War II era to a specific equation of 'military values' with a conservative moral and political stance.¹ One article noted that while the number of officers identifying themselves as having no party affiliation had fallen from 46 percent to 27 percent, the percentage that identified itself as Republican had grown from 33 percent to 64 percent.² Some cited anecdotal evidence that, contrary to past practice, officers now were willing to identify their party preference to subordinates or write letters to editors commenting on party politics. This was in part due to the cultivation of the military as an interest group by Republicans, and in part a reaction by the military to the perception that Republicans were 'pro-military' and to efforts of Republicans in the 1980s to increase defense spending. This presented a welcome contrast with what the military saw as the anti-military stance of the Democratic

Party, beginning with Democratic opposition to the Vietnam War with its attendant anti-military rhetoric and continuing with Democratic efforts to cut military budgets.³

This process, in addition to increasing the identification of military personnel with the Republican Party, also began to draw the military into the political process. As debates over the size of the defense budget intensified with the end of the Cold War and a perceived opportunity to cut spending in light of a reduced threat, senior officers were drawn into these debates by partisans on either side, but generally on the Republican side since Republicans were usually those who endorsed no or smaller cuts in defense spending. This was not always the case, however. For example, the military intervened in the debate over strategic missile defense during the Reagan administration, working to slow the program because it would compete with traditional military weapons systems for funding.⁴

During the same period, the role of the military in deciding on the use of military force increased. Up to the time of the Vietnam War the decision to employ military force had generally been reached by civilian political leaders with the private advice of the military leadership. After Vietnam--and partly as a result of the military reaction to it--military attitudes changed to the point that senior military officers believed it acceptable for the military to insist publicly rather than just to advise behind closed doors. This was seen to be particularly appropriate in matters regarded as crucial, such as rules of engagement, what type of force to employ, or exit strategies.⁵ The stature of the military leadership, especially in the aftermath of the Gulf War, was such that various presidents have acted as though the Joint Chiefs of Staff held a veto on the use of military power.⁶

Political activity by the military began to take a more activist form during the Bush administration. A great part of this was due to the appointment of General Colin Powell as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Powell had spent a great deal of time in assignments with a political cast, including a White House Fellowship in the Office of Management and Budget and service as deputy National Security Advisor under Presidents Reagan and Bush and National Security Advisor under Bush. Powell left his position as National Security Advisor to become Commander, U.S. Forces Command. He remained in this position for less than a year before being appointed as Chairman.

The U.S. success in the Gulf War left Powell as perhaps the most widely admired and influential military officer of his generation. Powell and his contemporaries in the military had grown up as company grade officers in Vietnam, and the experience obviously made a huge impression on him. In his memoirs, Powell remarks at length on the influence that the Vietnam War had on him and his peers. He relates that they resolved that when they were in charge, they "would not acquiesce in half-hearted warfare for half-baked reasons" without the support of the American people.⁷ This would turn out to be the major theme of his ideas towards U.S. Bosnia policy.

Powell spoke out publicly on this issue at various times, but his most notable statements came in the fall of 1992. The first of these came in late September in a front page article in the New York Times entitled "Powell Delivers a Resounding No On Using Limited Force in Bosnia." In an interview that the author describes as "sometimes emotional", Powell equated 'limited' military action with being indifferent to the achievement of a goal. He "angrily" denounced civilian officials who wished to employ the U.S. military for purposes that were not clearly defined. At issue at the time was the

idea of enforcing a no-fly area, as discussed earlier. At this particular juncture, the no-fly enforcement was being discussed as a measure to end the shadowing of UN relief flights into Sarajevo by Bosnian Serb aircraft. The article describes a diplomatic note composed by administration officials calling on the Serbs to end the shadowing of the flights and states that the language of the note was toned down at the insistence of the Pentagon to ensure that it implied no action.⁸

A second instance came within a week. After reading an article that characterized the military's reluctance to intervene in Bosnia as 'no can do,'⁹ Powell wrote an Op-Ed article for the New York Times in response, assailing critics of the military who ask for military intervention around the world while they "shout for reductions that would gut the armed forces." He describes the situation in Bosnia as extremely complex "with deep ethnic and religious roots that go back a thousand years" and says that to that point no clear military goals in Bosnia had been formulated.¹⁰

What was especially noteworthy was the timing of these two articles. At the time, President Bush's reelection campaign was not doing well. Though it played only a very small overall part in the campaign, one issue on which Bush had been strongly criticized (not only Clinton but by members of his party, including the Republican Senate Majority Leader) was Bosnia. By any measure the articles--and other public statements by Powell and other military officers--were a public intervention in a U.S. policy debate. Given the timing of these articles and Powell's prominence and political weight, they were in effect an intervention in the national political process. Powell states that Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney and the National Security Council approved these two articles.¹¹ This

statement, far from mitigating the impression of a political point to the articles, in a subtle way reinforces the idea.

Following the election of President Clinton, Powell weighed in with another prominently featured article. This article, entitled "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead" appeared in the Winter 1992/93 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. While the earlier articles may have not been expressly intended for a political purpose, this article certainly was, as it appeared with other articles in the contents of the issue on the cover under the heading of "Advice for President Clinton." In the article, Powell makes several general policy recommendations on the employment of force and the function of the armed forces. Most interestingly, Powell in a remarkable passage forcefully advocates his vision for the size of the armed forces, warning against a 'hollow' military. But he does not stop at the state of the military. Rather, he continues on to warn of the effect of military reductions on the national economy and to state his firm conviction that "the American people are of the same mind."¹²

The political activity associated with military officers during the campaign did not all go against Clinton. About six weeks before the 1992 election, Clinton sought and received political endorsement from a prominent group of retired military officers, the most visible of whom was former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff William Crowe. Crowe publicly backed Clinton in his campaign and made a public appearance with Clinton for that purpose, stating that the opinions of other retired officers denigrating Clinton were overblown, and that his endorsement of Clinton was based on his fitness to deal with U.S. domestic issues, which he saw as an important element in national security.¹³ The effect of Powell's statements and this endorsement were to bring to a new

level the involvement of the military in the political and policy processes, to make permissible the public questioning of national policy by military leaders, and to show senior military officers as willing to take sides in domestic political disputes. Crowe was later named U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain, in effect rewarding him for his statement in one of the traditional ways that Presidents had always rewarded their political backers.

As President Clinton assumed office, it was obvious that his relationship with the U.S. military would not be smooth, especially at the outset. There were several reasons for the problems in this relationship. Clinton had avoided military service in Vietnam and was perceived as having been less than truthful about it during his presidential campaign. He had during the same period demonstrated against the Vietnam War while overseas as a student in England. He had all but admitted to marital infidelity and had admitted to experimentation with illegal drugs. This all combined to create some degree of dissatisfaction with Clinton in the military at the very outset of his term, both in the ranks and amongst some of the senior leadership. And to make matters worse, one of Clinton's very first acts was to change military regulations to allow homosexuals to openly serve in the military, a move that was deeply unpopular in the military at all levels.

The most important aspect of this dissatisfaction was its very public nature. Junior service members were quoted by the news media voicing their mistrust of Clinton; one article quoted a junior sailor's reaction to a planned Clinton visit to his ship as, "The man's got a lot of explaining to do."¹⁴ Not only were such statements not discouraged by senior military leaders, but some senior leaders were even more outspoken than those in the ranks. One general officer was administratively punished and forced to retire after

describing Clinton as gay-loving, womanizing, draft-dodging, and potsmoking in remarks to service members at a military function. In the aftermath of this episode, Air Force Chief of Staff General Merrill McPeak felt constrained to remark that he felt the episode was not trivial and that it was critical that the integrity of the chain-of-command remain intact. This, he said, was something about which military officers must have "almost a religious attitude."¹⁵ This problem was never overcome within the military during Clinton's time as president; within a few years two more officers were punished for violating Article 88 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, forbidding contemptuous words against high civilian officials, and the assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps thought it necessary to issue a warning to Marine general officers about officers publicly criticizing the Commander-in-Chief.¹⁶

The strained relations between Clinton and the military made it very difficult for him to exercise full and firm control over the military establishment and had a very definite effect on the Clinton administration's employment of the military instrument of power. For the first few months of his administration, Clinton felt that he needed to reach out to service members in an effort to win over the military and made trips to military installations to do so.¹⁷ At the same time, he tried to keep the Department of Defense at a kind of political arm's length, an effort that lasted through most of his time in office. His first Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, had been a prominent Democratic congressional expert on defense matters; his last one, William Cohen, was a Republican congressional defense expert. Each of these appointments can be seen in a way as an effort to hand off the Department of Defense, in the first instance to Congressional Democrats, in the second to Republicans. The focus of Clinton foreign and national security policy was far

more economic than ever before; this change in focus combined with perceived lack of interest and inconsistency towards the military kept the relationship fairly sour.¹⁸

The greatest effect of this tension was felt in the Clinton efforts to formulate policy towards Bosnia. Subsequent to Clinton taking office, General Powell continued to voice his objections to employment of military means towards influencing the situation. His stature and popularity with the public combined with Clinton's weakness vis-à-vis the military made his voice probably the most important on the issue, outweighing even the President's. Powell's time as Chairman also gave rise to two of the most often-quoted remarks on the employment of the military. The first, and most famous, was UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright's question, "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?" This remark was an indication of the frustration and tension within the administration over the matter. The second, less widely known but just as telling, was a remark attributed to General Powell: "We don't do mountains, we do deserts." This was perhaps apocryphal and has also been attributed to others, but in through much repetition came to represent a certain mindset held in the military.¹⁹ It crystallized one of the military problems of Bosnia, the extremely difficult nature of the terrain and weather.

The result of all this was that in its early years the Clinton administration's desire to deal in some way with the problem of Bosnia foundered on the objections of General Powell. These objections were a major factor in the tepid U.S. commitment to the Vance-Owen plan and therefore in the failure of the plan itself. To be fair, the policy at that early stage was not well thought out. Those who argued most loudly for the use of the military often did so in support of an idea of multiethnic society that no longer had

very much basis in Bosnian reality.²⁰ Nevertheless, Powell's forceful and well-known objections to the use of military means in Bosnia combined with his immense personal prestige relative to the President had made it extremely difficult for the administration even to discuss policy options that included military means. This problem was reflected in the changing public utterances of Secretary of Defense Aspin. In September of 1992, three months before being selected by Clinton, Aspin had said that he would not quietly acquiesce in rigid limits or an all-or-nothing approach to the use of military force that he ascribed to military leaders.²¹ Two months after the Clinton administration took office, Aspin had changed to a position that endorsed the tight restrictions on the use of the military advocated by General Powell and other military leaders. This came as a surprise to other senior administration officials, including Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who in public had held out the prospect of U.S. participation in a force to implement the Vance-Owen plan. The military was perceived in "open opposition" to this idea.²²

Powell's successor, General Shalikashvili, was either not as strongly opposed to military action in Bosnia or did not voice his objections so publicly. But even after General Powell's departure, military leaders strongly discouraged involvement in Bosnia, publicly and otherwise. One way of doing this was to portray the situation in Bosnia as basically an insoluble mess. For example, in testimony before Congress in January 1993, Admiral Mike Cramer, an officer from the Joint Staff explained his understanding of the underlying problem in Bosnia as dating from the "13th century, where there has been constant ethnic and religious fighting among and between these groups"²³ Military leaders as well as some Congressional leaders frequently expressed this viewpoint, whose effect was to render any idea of making an impression on the situation as unrealistic.

Some observers perceived the military's frequently very high estimates of resources necessary to accomplish anything and framing of military options in the most negative possible light as other tactics aimed at forestalling involvement. Given the President's problems with the military, there was a further perception that the Pentagon had effectively taken over the power to decide when the U.S. should commit combat forces.²⁴

During the period from the end of 1993 to mid-1995 in which U.S. policy initiatives on Bosnia were all but suspended, any movement on the issue was driven by events on the ground that demanded a reaction. One key change was the commitment by President Clinton in December 1994 to use up to 25,000 U.S. troops to cover the withdrawal of UN peacekeeping troops in Bosnia if such a withdrawal were decided. This commitment made firm the first, lukewarm proposal to use U.S. troops in Bosnia, made in February 1993. The reason for this decision was the involvement in the UN peacekeeping operation of several NATO allies of the U.S. and the feeling that, if these countries' forces were left on their own in such an eventuality, the NATO alliance would be severely damaged and might even fall apart.²⁵ The Pentagon also backed this commitment with little reluctance. In a meeting of Joint Staff officers, Powell's successor as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Shalikashvili asked of those present whether the U.S. should provide cover for such a withdrawal. The instant answer of all those present was yes.²⁶ At this point, the U.S. military and NATO began planning for such an eventuality, a process that would result in a document known as NATO OPLAN 40104. As finally worked out, this plan provided for U.S. units to move by road and sea to the region, cross into Bosnia from the north and west to the area around Tuzla in the northeastern portion of the country, and then move into the Drina valley on the

eastern side of Bosnia along its border with Serbia and Montenegro. This latter area, which was remote even to other areas of Bosnia, was where the most exposed UN units were and was that which the Serbs thought most important to their cause. NATO troops employed would total 82,000, including the U.S. commitment.²⁷

This commitment was made in the winter of 1994-1995. The fighting in Bosnia over the years since its outbreak had always had something of a cyclical nature, being at its most intense during the summer and fall and dying down during the harsh winters and wet springs common in the region. At the time this commitment was made, the situation in Bosnia was quiet, due to winter conditions. Announcing the decision, the administration said that there was no immediate prospect of an evacuation of UN forces, and that such an evacuation was both unnecessary and undesirable.²⁸

With the coming of better weather in the spring of 1995, however, the prospect of executing OPLAN 40104 began to become very real. On 25 May 1995, the commander of UN forces in Bosnia, British General Rupert Smith, asked for and received air strikes in response to Serb violation of a weapons exclusion zone around Sarajevo. The Serbs in return shelled downtown Tuzla, killing 71 civilians in a café. They also seized 400 UN troops as hostages and over the following two weeks, took more UN troops hostage while releasing some others. These hostages were released only after a 10 June announcement by the UN command that it would until further notice operate only in accordance with peacekeeping principles, which fulfilled the Serb insistence that the UN abjure the use of force.²⁹

Later in the summer of 1995, significant military events in Bosnia changed the situation in such a way that both made a negotiated end to the fighting easier to achieve

and strongly focused the attention and interest of the U.S. on finding a solution for the problem, which at this point had been going on for more than three years. The first of these events were the Serb overrunning of two of the UN safe areas, Zepa and Srebrenica, in July. Both of these actions were accompanied by further atrocities on the part of the Serbs. This was especially true in Srebrenica, where as many as 7,500 men and boys were killed over a week-long period. This was an especial humiliation for the UN forces. A Dutch battalion in the town was denied air support by the UN leadership in Sarajevo, then brushed aside by Serb forces which then began the killing.³⁰ The second of these events was the commencement of Croatian offensives in the Krajina and in western Slavonia. These offensives were aimed at reversing Serb gains from the very beginning of the fighting in the former Yugoslavia and, in spite of U.S. warnings to the Croats on the difficulties they would face in taking on the Serbs, were quite successfully executed. Thousands of Serbs in both areas fled before the attacks.³¹

These events resolved two territorial issues that would have been difficult if not impossible to resolve in negotiations. Srebrenica and Zepa were islands of Bosnian Muslims in an area from which the Serbs had cleansed the rest of the Muslim population. The Krajina was by this point an isolated Serb area in the midst of a Croatian portion of Bosnia that was on the Bosnian border with Croatia. The U.S. even tacitly encouraged the offensive. While U.S. Ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith was delivering demarches to the Croatian government demanding an end to the offensive³², Richard Holbrooke, the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian affairs and the Clinton administration's lead diplomat for the region was telling Croatian president Franjo Tudjman that "the offensive had great value" to negotiations then beginning which

would lead to the Dayton agreement.³³ Serb president Milosevic may also have seen the value of resolving the issue of the Krajina in favor of the Croats, as the withdrawal of the Serb military from the Krajina was preceded by the visit of a high-level Croatian official to Belgrade and then conducted in a very organized fashion by a senior Yugoslav officer sent to the Krajina from Belgrade.³⁴ If true, this was a reflection of Milosevic's intense desire to free Serbia from UN sanctions, which were creating great difficulties for the Serb economy.

These events changed the nature of the debate about Bosnia within the U.S. government. Before this point, some in the U.S. had believed that the proper goal was the preservation of a multi-ethnic society. While there had not been a multi-ethnic society in Bosnia since at least mid-1993, it took the horrible event of Srebrenica to bring this home. Now the goal was an end to the violence in Bosnia, and the reality was setting in that the country would in some sense have to be partitioned. With Srebrenica, Zepa, and the third Muslim enclave of Goradze within Serb-held territory on the one hand and the Serb-held Krajina in Croat and Muslim territory on the other, any negotiation faced an insuperable obstacle. The fall of Zepa and Srebrenica and of the Krajina changed this situation and also brought the division of territory on the ground in Bosnia close to the proportion being discussed at that time as the basis of a possible settlement.³⁵

The events around Zepa and especially Srebrenica brought into stark view the inadequacies of the UNPROFOR and the conditions of its employment. In particular, the UN force in Srebrenica had requested air strikes when it became apparent that Serbs were massing for an attack on the town. The system for approval of these missions required that the UN military and civilian chiefs in Bosnia and the NATO chain-of-command

approve these missions. In this instance the UN civilian chief did not do so, and the unit in Srebrenica felt itself powerless to act without that support.³⁶

These events also brought into sharp focus the consequences of a withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping forces. The U.S. had committed itself to aiding in the evacuation of UN forces at a time of relative quiet in Bosnia. This relative quiet was now shattered, and along with it the credibility and therefore the purpose of the UN in Bosnia. The U.S. found itself faced with the possibility of a major commitment of ground forces in Bosnia to conduct a withdrawal of UN forces. There was every expectation that the conditions under which they would have to do so would be difficult in the extreme, as Bosnian Muslim forces, which had already been known to fire at UN soldiers trying to get out of the path of Serb attacks³⁷ might well resist the withdrawal of all UN forces from the country. This would put the U.S. in the politically very difficult position of fighting the Bosnian Muslims in order to facilitate the withdrawal of the UN, which would almost certainly be followed by further Serb attacks and still more events along the lines of Srebrenica and Zepa.

The Clinton administration after considering these alternatives--and well aware of the changed situation on the ground and improved prospects for negotiation--decided that if U.S. troops were going to be involved in any case, it would be far better to be involved on U.S. terms in a situation that was more governable than the potential confusion of a withdrawal while in contact with hostile forces in the context of a defeat by the Bosnian Serbs of the UN and NATO.³⁸ After some deliberation, the administration adopted Richard Holbrooke's idea for a basically unilateral U.S. effort to construct a negotiated peace that would be implemented by NATO forces, including 25,000 U.S. troops.³⁹

Significantly, Holbrooke, who would lead the negotiations for the U.S., engineered a process that would bypass the interagency policy process of the National Security Council, which he had identified as one of the obstacles in formulating policy. This was because in the absence of an immediate consensus between the Departments of State and Defense, the military (as distinct from the civilian side of the Department of Defense), and any other agency involved, the ultimate arbiter was the President. Principals in the policy process were extremely reluctant to bring matters to the President for a decision as this was perceived as a failure on the part of the President's immediate subordinates.⁴⁰ Holbrooke memorably described this system as a "gigantic stalemate machine."⁴¹ To avoid this problem, Holbrooke put together a negotiating team with representatives from all agencies concerned, specifically the Departments of State and Defense, the White House staff, and the military.⁴² The representative from the military was the Joint Staff J5 (Strategic Plans and Policy) officer, then Lieutenant General Wesley Clark. Additionally, the White House and NSC were represented by Major General Don Kerrick. Holbrooke and his team then began a diplomatic process through the late summer and early fall of 1995 that would climax with the convening of talks involving all parties at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, and the acceptance on 21 November on what came to be known as the Dayton agreement.

The progress of these negotiations and the Croatian offensive mentioned above was given an inadvertent push forward by the Bosnian Serbs. On 27 August 1995, at the beginning of the diplomatic efforts that would lead to the Dayton agreement, Holbrooke appeared on U.S. television warning that if the negotiations did not begin to show results soon there would be action "very adverse to Serbian goals" and that NATO would be

heavily involved. The next day a mortar round landed on the same Sarajevo marketplace on which a mortar round had landed in the prominent incident in February 1994, this time killing 38 and wounding 85. Later that day General Rupert Smith and U.S. Admiral Leighton Smith, the NATO commander for the area authorized NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs.⁴³ These air strikes lasted, with one pause, for nearly two weeks. Though they were undoubtedly helpful to the ongoing diplomatic effort, Holbrooke expressed great dissatisfaction that the negotiations and the air strikes were not coordinated, and that the NATO air commander concerned was forbidden from speaking to Clark by Admiral Smith. (The officers concerned in NATO explained this as a desire to maintain the multilateral command structure of NATO and to avoid turning the operation into a unilateral U.S. one.)⁴⁴ Holbrooke adds that the pause in the bombing worried him because he feared that it would be difficult to get the missions re-started if the negotiations stalled.⁴⁵ The strikes were resumed after a 48 hour pause, and U.S. Navy Tomahawk cruise missiles were employed along with NATO aircraft; the use of the Tomahawk had a tremendous psychological impact on the Serbs.⁴⁶

As the negotiating process began, planners in the Pentagon, NATO, and U.S. European Command began to prepare for the possibility of a mission in support of a negotiated peace. The leadership of the U.S. military thus found itself, almost against its will, planning for the deployment of significant U.S. ground combat forces into Bosnia. To this point, the military had been one of the primary obstacles to consensus within the interagency process. Now, due to the progress of events and Holbrooke's initiative to create a miniature inter-agency group to search for a negotiated settlement, the military was at the cusp of embarking on the very operation which it had from the very outset

tried its best to avoid. In spite of the fact that the effort for a negotiated settlement was now U.S. policy, many in the military were still highly resistant to the idea and struggled against it. As the negotiations at Dayton were being concluded, Holbrooke asked Clark if he understood "that there are members of the Joint Chiefs who want our effort to fail." Though Clark insisted that this was not true of Shalikashvili, he also admits that he "sensed a lot of truth in what Holbrooke was saying."⁴⁷ Even after the successful conclusion of the Dayton agreement, resistance on the part of the military leadership remained. At a meeting on 22 November 1995 (the day after the conclusion of the negotiations), both President Clinton and Vice President Gore felt it necessary to admonish General Shalikashvili and Deputy Secretary of Defense John White. Gore, referring to the need for Congressional support to deploy the U.S. military to Bosnia, said that the attitude of the military was making Congress "uncomfortable" and "losing us votes." Clinton added that while he did not want dishonesty from the military leadership, the problem was that "you people have body language" and said that Congress would not support the mission over the objections of the Pentagon. He then directly told Shalikashvili and everyone else present, "I want every one here to get behind the agreement." A year later, Clinton said that he and Gore had planned these remarks in advance.⁴⁸

With deployment in support of the eventual agreement a near certainty, the military turned its attention to the particulars and scope of the mission it would be given. The negotiations at Dayton were preceded and paralleled by discussions within the Pentagon and the U.S. government over the parameters of the deployment, over just what the peacekeepers--who would be known as the Implementation Force (IFOR)--would do

The results of these intra-U.S. government discussions would basically decide the role and composition of IFOR with little consultation of Allied nations, irrespective of the fact that they would provide 60-70 percent of IFOR.⁴⁹ The most important consideration for the military was one that was accepted by all concerned with little discussion. This was the need at all costs to avoid a repetition of the disastrous experience of the UN force that had preceded IFOR. Thus it was agreed that IFOR would deploy with overwhelming force and with robust rules of engagement (ROE) that allowed commanders full scope for self-defense.⁵⁰

Beyond this point, there was intense debate over nearly every aspect of the role of IFOR. This debate centered on the nature of IFOR's responsibilities. The participants describe the debate as being between 'maximalists' desiring a robust role for IFOR that would include strong support for accomplishing political and humanitarian tasks in Bosnia, and 'minimalists' who wished to ensure that military forces would not become entangled so as to be able to depart after the shortest period possible. The Departments of State and Defense generally represented the maximalist and minimalist viewpoints, respectively.⁵¹ The debate was largely driven by considerations of what the Congress and U.S. public were likely to approve, especially as this was occurring shortly before the beginning of another U.S. presidential election campaign. Further, there was some disagreement over what the purpose of the Dayton agreement would be. If its purpose was to give the militarily weaker Muslim-Croat Federation forces space to strengthen themselves and create a military balance within the country to make the outbreak of further fighting less likely, then a minimalist approach would be adequate. If, on the other hand, the purpose of the Dayton agreement was to be the creation of a state with

functioning institutions, then a maximalist role for IFOR would be necessary. Both sides agreed that the first tasks of IFOR would be to monitor compliance with the military aspects of the agreement, the cease-fire, and the separation of armed forces in Bosnia. The minimalists wanted to leave the mission at that; the maximalists wished to add other tasks such as keeping roads open and ensuring freedom of movement, protecting refugees returning to their homes, providing security for elections, forcefully responding to human rights violations, and arresting war criminals.⁵²

As of mid-October of 1995, some issues regarding IFOR had been resolved with little dispute. The military proposal to locate IFOR headquarters in Zagreb for security reasons and because there were no quarters available in Sarajevo suitable for a four-star admiral, was rejected. The idea of using IFOR elements to actively seek out indicted war criminals for arrest was also rejected.⁵³ The military also wanted to deploy IFOR only in the Federation as opposed to all of Bosnia. This, in the view of the maximalists, would create something analogous to the Demilitarized Zone in Korea and effectively divide Bosnia along that line. After an appeal by Holbrooke to Shalikashvili and Secretary of Defense William Perry, it was agreed that IFOR would deploy throughout the country.⁵⁴

This left several other issues in dispute. The key issues were whether either IFOR or the International Police Task Force (IPTF), a policing agency set up by the Dayton agreement, would have any police functions; whether or not IFOR would have the obligation to assist international civilian personnel who were attacked or stop gross violations of human rights; and IFOR's role in civilian implementation and relationship with the leader for civilian implementation created by the Dayton agreement, the High Representative (HR). The first two of these issues proved especially contentious.

Military leaders feared that if IFOR had the mission of performing police functions, IFOR would become subject to 'mission-creep', a gradual process of becoming more involved in the small details of daily conflict in Bosnia and potentially being drawn in on one side or the other of a dispute that could turn violent while remaining basically insoluble. The obligation to come to the aid of international civilian personnel also was fiercely resisted by the military, for much the same reasons. The fear was that IFOR could become involved in defending officials of the civilian implementation authority who had taken sides in a dispute, thereby putting IFOR in the position of taking sides.⁵⁵

These two issues were the subject of especially intense discussion at meetings of the National Security Council shortly before the beginning of the negotiations at Dayton. Even within the State Department there was disagreement on what position should be taken at these meetings. Holbrooke, who was the chief advocate of an expansive and forceful role for IFOR, was told that advocating the maximalist view in the meetings would put the President in a politically very difficult position, as the only way that IFOR would have the sort of role Holbrooke envisioned would be if the President overruled the military. For the reasons discussed earlier, this would have been politically problematic for Clinton and might have jeopardized Congressional backing for the IFOR mission.⁵⁶ Holbrooke later admitted that, since military acquiescence in the IFOR mission would be necessary to gain public approval, the military was able to dominate the decision-making process in the formulation of their own mission.⁵⁷

These issues were partly settled in a compromise suggested by Shalikashvili. This compromise was to give IFOR unlimited authority to accomplish limited

responsibilities. Article VI, Annex 1A of the Dayton agreement, which implements this compromise, stated:

The parties understand and agree that the IFOR Commander shall have the authority, without interference or permission of any party, to do all that the Commander judges necessary and proper, including the use of military force, to protect the IFOR and carry out the responsibilities listed above The violating party shall be subject to military action by the IFOR, including the use of necessary force to ensure compliance with this annex.⁵⁸

The agreement also gave IFOR the right to assist elections, humanitarian missions, refugee movements and to respond to outbreaks of violence but did not specify that it would do so. This language gave IFOR the right to go to the assistance of international organizations, refugees returning to their homes, or victims of violence, but also maintained the right of IFOR to ignore such things.

The matter of police powers was settled on the military's terms. Neither IFOR nor the IPTF were given any police powers under the Dayton agreement. While the IFOR Commander's broad discretion gave IFOR the wherewithal to bring varying degrees of pressure up to and including military force, IPTF was limited to bringing "problems to the attention of the parties, convening the Joint Civilian Commission [a purely consultative body], consulting with the United Nations, relevant states, and international organizations on further responses."⁵⁹

The matter of the relationship of IFOR to the HR was also decided largely according to the wishes of the military. Mindful of some of the perceived problems of the UN peacekeeping mission in Bosnia, the Pentagon had insisted that neither the HR nor any other civilian be in the IFOR chain-of-command, but rather that IFOR answer only to the NATO commander. They further insisted that IFOR have no formal

relationship with the HR. In the Dayton agreement, while the HR is responsible for maintaining liaison with IFOR and participating in certain joint commissions, it is specified that he has no authority over IFOR and gives him only the ability to advise on political-military matters.⁶⁰ In the end, the only tasks specifically given IFOR were those that were agreed to by the advocates of the minimalist outlook: separating military forces, establishing a zone of separation, and monitoring compliance with the terms of the military portion of the agreement.

Of the warring parties in Bosnia, only one had significant interest in or influence on the role of IFOR. The Bosnian Muslims retained a former official of the Reagan administration, Richard Perle, to advise them at Dayton. Perle had been a vocal critic of Clinton administration policy in Bosnia, which he saw as weak. However, in spite of his public stance on the matter, Holbrooke welcomed the idea of his advising the Bosnian Muslims as they did not have the necessary skills and background to conduct such a difficult negotiation. After going over Annex 1A, Perle met with Holbrooke's team and called it a "pathetic evasion of responsibility by the Pentagon." Perle, in consultation with the Bosnian Muslims, came up with an extensive list of changes to the Annex which would move it much closer to the desires of the maximalists. Holbrooke states that his goal was to use Perle's presence to make the IFOR role more robust while keeping Perle from publicly criticizing the Clinton administration.⁶¹

While the negotiations were proceeding at Dayton, in Washington the Clinton administration was formulating a policy that would become known as 'train and equip'. As the ideal goal of disarmament by all parties was out of the question and the U.S. Congress threatened a unilateral lifting of the arms embargo, Clinton had stated that in

the event a peace agreement was reached the U.S. would organize an effort to give the Federation the military equipment and training necessary to defend itself. The military strongly opposed this idea, feeling that it would increase the chances of another war and make it unlikely that the parties in Bosnia would see IFOR as neutral. This opposition came in spite of the decision of the President to back the idea. In the end, the program was crafted at the insistence of the Pentagon so that there would be no U.S. military involvement and the equipment would be provided by nations other than the U.S.⁶²

Throughout the negotiating process and beyond, most public statements by U.S. military leaders were announcements of what the military could not or should not do. The main thrust of these remarks was the same as those clauses of the Dayton agreement that gave IFOR very limited obligations, repeatedly saying that anything that fell outside those obligations would not be undertaken. A day after the conclusion of the negotiations in Dayton a publicly released 'Mission Statement' from the Joint Chiefs of Staff emphasized that IFOR was "not responsible for election security, conducting humanitarian missions, or clearing mines," though IFOR would "coordinate with" agencies that performed these tasks. General Shalikashvili continually spoke of what IFOR would not do. In private, he had during the discussions over the role of IFOR before Dayton at one point heatedly said at a National Security Council meeting that there were things that IFOR neither could, should, nor would do.⁶³ Approximately one year later, as IFOR was becoming the Stabilization Force (SFOR) and remaining past the originally planned date for withdrawal, Shalikashvili felt that he again had to outline what would not be done, in this case stating that ensuring freedom of movement and arresting war criminals were not military tasks.⁶⁴

The political conditions within the Clinton administration, specifically his relationship with the Department of Defense and senior military officers, were perhaps the single major factor that determined the shape of the Dayton agreement. For domestic political reasons, one of which was certainly resistance of the military to the entire project, President Clinton and his administration stated at the beginning of the IFOR mission that it would last one year. The imperative to meet this deadline was another factor in limiting specified tasks for IFOR, for a more expansive list of tasks that included tasks with broader political or social objects would require more time and whose results would be much more difficult to assess. Though some believe that the military did not wish to be involved at all and went to some lengths to avoid involvement,⁶⁵ the fact that President Clinton had by mid-1993 committed the U.S. to providing forces to implement a negotiated peace in Bosnia meant that a successful negotiation effort would lead to such a mission. The military's position vis-à-vis the President politically and in terms of prestige meant that the resulting Dayton agreement was created on the military's terms, in that missions in the implementation of the agreement that the military did not want they did not get.

¹Bacevich and Kohn, "Grand Army of the Republicans," 22-25.

²Feaver and Kohn, "The Gap," 41.

³Ibid.; Richard H. Kohn, "The Erosion of Civilian Control of the Military in the United States Today," *Naval War College Review* LV, no. 9, Summer 2002, 26.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Feaver and Kohn, "The Gap."

⁶Charles A.Stevenson, "The Evolving Clinton Doctrine on the Use of Force", *Armed Forces and Society* 22, Issue 4, New Brunswick NJ, Summer 1996, 511.

⁷Colin L. Powell, *My American Journey*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996; Random House, 1995), 144.

⁸Michael R.Gordon, "Powell Delivers a Resounding No On Using Limited Force in Bosnia", *New York Times*, 28 September 1992, A1.

⁹Powell, *My American Journey*, 544.

¹⁰Colin L. Powell, "Why Generals Get Nervous", *New York Times*, 8 October 1992, A21.

¹¹Powell, *My American Journey*, 544.

¹²Colin L. Powell, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, Winter 1992/1993, 32-45.

¹³Edwin Chen, "Clinton Denies Fulbright Pulled Strings on Draft", *Los Angeles Times*, 20 September 1992, 1.

¹⁴Paul Richter, "Clinton Aims to Win Over Wary Troops, Military", *Los Angeles Times*, 12 March 1993, 14.

¹⁵John Lancaster, "General Who Mocked Clinton Set to Retire", *Washington Post*, 19 June 1993, A01.

¹⁶Kohn, "The Erosion of Civilian Control," 11.

¹⁷Richter, "Clinton Aims to Win Over Wary Troops."

¹⁸Kohn, "The Erosion of Civilian Control," 12.

¹⁹Woodward, "Upside-Down Policy," 112. This remark has been variously cited many times and attributed to Powell as well as to U.S. military personnel in general.

²⁰Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 326.

²¹James Gerstenzang, "Bush Offers Criteria for Use of Force Strategy", *Los Angeles Times*, 6 January 1992, 1.

²²Jim Hoagland, "The Pentagon's Reluctance on Bosnia", *Washington Post*, 17 March 1993, A23.

²³U.S. Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee, *Briefing on the Current Operations in Somalia, Iraq, and Yugoslavia*, 103rd Congress, 1st sess., 29 January 1993.

²⁴Paul Quinn-Judge, "Doubts of Top Brass on the Use of Power Carry Great Weight", *Boston Globe*, 20 April 1994, 12.

²⁵Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 46-47.

²⁶Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War* (New York: Public Affairs Books, 2001), 43.

²⁷Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 49.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 48-49.

²⁹Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 329.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 325; Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 350.

³¹*Ibid.*, 356.

³²*Ibid.*, 356.

³³Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 160.

³⁴Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 331-333.

³⁵Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 71-73.

³⁶Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 347-350.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 347.

³⁸Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 50.

³⁹Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 74-75.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 81.

⁴¹Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 115.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 174; Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 171.

⁴³Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 352.

⁴⁴Robert C. Owen, "Summary", in *Deliberate Force: A Case Study in Effective Air Campaigning*, ed. Robert C. Owen (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press), 508-510.

⁴⁵Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 118.

⁴⁶Owen, "Summary", 492.

⁴⁷Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 65.

⁴⁸Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 316.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 223.

⁵⁰Eric Schmitt, "Military Now Says Bosnia Peace Plan Will Work", *New York Times*, 27 November 1995, 1; Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 141-142.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 145; Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 220.

⁵²Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 144, 146.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 143, n. 61.

⁵⁴Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 221.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 220-221.

⁵⁶Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 146, n. 67.

⁵⁷Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 219.

⁵⁸Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, *General Framework Agreement on Peace*, Article VI Annex 1a, available from <http://www.osce.org/essentials/gfap/eng/home.asp>, accessed 15 March 2003.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, Annex 11, Article V.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, Annex 1a; Annex 11.

⁶¹Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 250, 270.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 277

⁶³Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 147.

⁶⁴Peter Baker and Bradley Graham, "Clinton Decides to Keep U.S. Troops in Bosnia," *Washington Post*, 16 November 1996, A01.

⁶⁵Ed Vullaimy, "Bosnia: The Secret War," *Manchester Guardian*, 20 May 1996, 12.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS/FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The dominance of the military in the intra-U.S. government discussions regarding the Dayton negotiations and the near-total preoccupation with military-related issues, combined with the refusal of the military to commit even to simple coordination with civil implementation authorities, had the effect of leaving a large gap of authority between the military and civilian agencies that would implement the agreement. The consideration of military issues and disputes over the roles and responsibilities of IFOR so overshadowed all other matters that, aside from insulating IFOR from any commitment whatsoever in the areas of civil or police functions, those two functions were barely even considered. The civil authorities were given authority and responsibilities but little in the way of means; the police authorities were given neither authority nor means. IFOR, the only one of the three at the outset with any means to speak of to accomplish anything at all, was given nearly unlimited authority and extremely circumscribed responsibilities. These imbalances would result in serious problems in implementation of the civil and police provisions of the Dayton accord, and the gradual assumption of more tasks by IFOR and its successor SFOR in the interests of hastening the implementation of the accord.

By many measures, IFOR and SFOR were highly successful right from the start of their operations. In the six and a half years since the start of the IFOR mission there have been no U.S. casualties due to hostile action by military units and only a few

incidents requiring even a show of force by IFOR or SFOR. There have been incidents of confrontation between SFOR and civilian crowds; one in Brcko in 1996 involving a crowd of Serb civilians resulted in injury to two U.S. soldiers. Confrontations in other parts of Bosnia between SFOR soldiers from other nations and Croatian nationalists have occurred; there have been limited casualties amongst both the soldiers and civilians as a result of these incidents. But from the beginning of the IFOR deployment there has never been any doubt that either IFOR or SFOR had absolute control of the military situation in Bosnia. One resounding success has been the creation of psychological dominance over the political and military leadership of Bosnia. Though there were some problems at the beginning--local military leaders, for example, sent junior officers to meetings with IFOR commanders, or sent no one at all¹--this eventually changed to the point of almost total deference to SFOR. By 1999, senior Bosnian military officers and ministers without exception went out of their way to ensure that their actions were not misunderstood by SFOR because of their impression of the overwhelming strength of SFOR.²

This dominance has helped to keep many emotional political problems under control. For example, when in early 2001 Croatian nationalist politicians and military officers made a bid to split the Federation and institute their own 'third entity' in the Herzegovina region of Bosnia, their military leaders were at great pains to ensure by way of every channel available to them that SFOR understood that their units would remain in their barracks, their weapons in their storage areas, and that the matter was a political one that would be settled by political means.³ The psychological dominance of SFOR and the total lack of violence have also allowed the gradual diminishing of tensions in Bosnia,

creating the conditions for international organizations to do their work, for the beginning of reconstruction, and for the passions aroused by the war to very slowly calm.

A noteworthy characteristic of the conduct of U.S. operations in support of IFOR and SFOR has been a huge emphasis on force protection. U.S. soldiers were allowed only the most limited contact with the populace and their base camps were run with extremely strict security measures and access procedures. In the U.S. Army Europe After-Action Review of initial IFOR operations, the stringent force protection measures used by the U.S., which were far more rigid and extensive than those used by other nations participating in IFOR, are attributed to "implied guidance to incur no casualties" and identified force protection as the Commander, U.S. European Command's "highest priority."⁴ Whether this implied guidance originated from military or political sources is not clear. However, in an interview shortly before the IFOR deployment, President Clinton in answering a question about the dangers that would face U.S. soldiers in Bosnia went into fairly remarkable detail on specific force protection measures.⁵ That the President was informed to this degree on these specifics is suggestive of his personal interest in the topic.

Many, including some members of the initial IFOR deployment, have recognized that this emphasis on force protection has hurt the other aspects of mission accomplishment. This was also noted in IFOR after action-reviews, one of which stated that the emphasis on casualty-free operations "added to the difficulties and expense of deployment as well as causing some degradation to mission effectiveness."⁶ Soldiers in the initial deployment whose duties encompassed areas such as civil-military affairs were hindered in their duties by force protection restrictions, and humanitarian donations from

the U.S. such as blankets sometimes went undistributed because of a ban on such activities. At one point, chaplains were prohibited from participating in a religious service in the local area that would have brought together local inhabitants from all three ethnic groups. U.S. troops isolated on their bases were described by observers from the international community as resembling a "fourth faction" and were contrasted with SFOR elements from other nations who made a point of interacting with the population.⁷

Many commentators have remarked on this force protection emphasis, observing that force protection, instead of serving the purpose of preserving the combat power of the deployed force to accomplish its mission, became the mission.⁸ This preoccupation still continues. As late as mid-2000 officers in the U.S. SFOR contingent were presenting briefings to visitors explaining and emphasizing that force protection was their first priority, with other tasks associated with the implementation of the Dayton agreement shown as secondary to that task.⁹

The perceived threat against which these measures were directed was almost certainly dissatisfied Bosnian Serbs resisting implementation of the agreement. The military viewed the Bosnian Serb Army as a credible force that would probably threaten IFOR to achieve its ends just as it had the UN peacekeeping forces. Croats and Muslims were perceived as the beneficiaries of the Dayton agreement and as unlikely to risk actions that would lead to the withdrawal of IFOR. Events proved these perceptions of the Croats and Muslims to be more or less correct. While there were some confrontations and problems involving all three groups in Bosnia, nearly all those that IFOR felt required a show of military force involved the Bosnian Serbs. The most serious of these involved a refusal by the Bosnian Serb Army to allow U.S. IFOR troops to inspect their

headquarters near the town on Han Pijesak. This incident came after several weeks of other similar obstructions. It was resolved on IFOR's terms when the Serbs were informed that if the inspections were not allowed within 20 minutes, IFOR would begin destroying their armored vehicles.¹⁰

To the extent that IFOR's deployment with overwhelming force and displays of combat power were intended deter challenges of any kind, it was certainly successful. But perceptions of a serious military threat from the Bosnian Serbs were misplaced. The Bosnian Serb conduct of their operations during the fighting noted earlier, in which they displayed an almost total reliance on heavy weapons and an often marked lack of morale, should have led to a more sanguine view of their capabilities and the threat from them. Further, throughout the fighting in Bosnia a major pillar of Bosnian Serb strength had been support from Belgrade. This consisted of not only logistical support but also political and diplomatic support. By 1995, since the Bosnian Serb leaders were under indictment for war crimes and no international leaders would deal with them, this support had become crucial to them in achieving their goals as the U.S. and the international community became more involved in Bosnia. This left them entirely dependent on Slobodan Milosevic to look after their interests. Milosevic, predictably, nearly entirely sacrificed their interests to his own, giving up at Dayton the Krajina, Gorazde, and Serb claims on any part of Sarajevo whatsoever. In the accounts of the Dayton negotiations, what is striking is the absolute contempt of Milosevic for the Bosnian Serbs. Holbrooke relates several instances of Milosevic's open scorn for them. After one contentious meeting that included both the Bosnian Serbs and Milosevic, Milosevic remarked to Holbrooke, "I told you not to bring those idiots to any meeting." After conceding all of

Sarajevo to the Bosnian Muslims, Milosevic said that Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic "earned Sarejevo by not abandoning it. He's one tough guy. It's his." Finally, when the Dayton negotiations were complete and the Bosnian Serbs resisted signing because of the many concessions Milosevic had made, he promised and delivered their signatures.¹¹

Observation of the Bosnian Serb leadership and of their relationship with Milosevic through nearly five months of constant meetings and intensive diplomacy led Holbrooke to see the Bosnian Serb leaders as "headstrong, given to empty theatrical statements, but in the end, essentially bullies when their bluff was called...they respected force or an unambiguous and credible threat to use it."¹² The two military members of Holbrooke's team, Generals Clark and Kerrick, who took part in the entire effort and also had gained a personal appreciation of the Bosnian Serbs, agreed with Holbrooke. When after the signing of the Dayton agreement President Clinton asked these members of the team how they thought implementation of the agreement would go, all of them said that there would be far fewer casualties than the public had been led to believe by the Pentagon.¹³ These predictions by Holbrooke and his military assistants turned out to be correct.

This misjudgment of the Bosnian Serbs was matched by a corresponding misjudgment concerning the fundamental nature of the problem in Bosnia and the rest of the former Yugoslavia. The U.S. military view of the problem was that it was the result of age-old ethnic tensions and a continuation of the interminably violent past of the region. This was reflected in studies prepared by military analysts and historians and in public statements by ranking military officers.¹⁴ This view, however, while built on a

small kernel of truth¹⁵, was very unsophisticated and not reflective of the reality of the breakup of Yugoslavia. It took into account neither the economic roots of the problem nor the exploitation by ruthless politicians for their own personal gain of ethnic problems that had been dormant nor those same politicians' use of modern mass media to conduct their campaigns. A better analysis would have recognized these aspects of the problem and sought in them opportunities. For example, a recognition and analysis of the central role of mass media in the conflict might have suggested the outlines of an information campaign with a goal of lessening the influence of nationalist politicians on all sides.

Right from the beginning of the IFOR mission, the gap left in the Dayton agreement between the military, civil, and police spheres created problems. The broad authority granted the IFOR commander to assist in the civil and police areas was very rarely used. This vacuum led to ugly problems in Sarajevo in the beginning of 1996. As the Grbavica neighborhood of Sarajevo, held by Serbs until the end of the fighting, was turned over to the control of the Federation, Serb policemen and thugs forced many unwilling Serbs in the neighborhood to burn their own homes and leave the area. Those who refused were subject to beatings, rape, and shootings. French and Italian IFOR troops in Sarajevo took little if any action to control the violence. One IFOR officer told reporters that people were entitled to burn their own homes if they wished. Several Serbs who were caught by IFOR soldiers setting fires or beating or raping residents of the area were turned over to Serb police, who promptly released them. A few IPTF officers were on the scene, but as they were unarmed and had no arrest authority, they could do nothing.¹⁶ Though not as prominent, there were similar instances of civil problems in the U.S. sector of IFOR; Serbs at various times beat and harassed Muslims and Croats

attempting to return to their homes and destroyed re-built houses of non-Serbs in areas they controlled.¹⁷

IFOR also did not use its broad authority to arrest indicted war criminals, even when opportunities to do so presented themselves. When IFOR initially deployed to Bosnia, indicted Bosnian Serb President Radovan Karadzic largely spent his time at his home in Pale, seemingly awaiting arrest.¹⁸ U.S. Admiral Leighton Smith, who was now the IFOR commander, in an interview with a Bosnian Serb television station stated that IFOR did not have the authority to arrest anyone.¹⁹ This was not true; IFOR had the authority to arrest indicted war criminals but was not obligated to do so. After a few months, possibly emboldened by IFOR inaction, Karadzic reemerged into Bosnian politics. While traveling through Bosnia to a public political event he reportedly drove through four IFOR checkpoints, one of them manned by U.S. soldiers.²⁰ Smith similarly limited IFOR involvement in any activity not specified by Dayton as a military responsibility. The maximalists, who believed that the Dayton accords would be effective only if IFOR took a proactive role and at least helped in civil and police areas were extremely unhappy with Smith and the other U.S. officers in the IFOR chain-of-command.²¹ Later, in late 2000, the U.S. government decided that the arrest of Karadzic and the other most-prominent Bosnian Serb indicted for war crimes, General Radtko Mladic, was a priority and poured significant resources into seeking their arrest. This was due to the continuing influence of the two--especially Karadzic--in urging the Bosnian Serbs to block the implementation of the Dayton agreement and the perception that unless they were removed from the Bosnian political scene, progress would be slow at best. By this time, however, each of the two had accumulated a few years of

experience in avoiding SFOR and traveled with very sophisticated security arrangements, making the problem of apprehending them difficult in the extreme.²² Through the end of 2001, both Karadzic and Mladic remained at large; as a result civil implementation authorities continued to have severe difficulties moving forward with Dayton provisions objected to by Bosnian Serb nationalists with links to both of them, especially Karadzic.

While IFOR was able to accomplish the tasks given it in the Dayton agreement on or ahead of schedule, implementation of the civil provisions of the Dayton agreement was ineffectual at the start. The HR, Carl Bildt, was neither given a budget nor any other resources and had to resort to running his office out of a wrecked apartment and his personal cellular telephone. Only after personally approaching European officials and pleading for help did the European Union provide him with a budget and other assistance. But because of this, the civilian implementation lagged badly and met none of its early goals.²³ In fact, the Bosnian Serbs took advantage of this weakness and the gap between military and civilian powers in the Dayton agreement, fighting every non-military issue in Dayton implementation while studiously avoiding confrontation with IFOR.²⁴

These shortfalls indirectly resulted from the dominance of the single issue of the military role in U.S. Bosnia policy, often to the exclusion of every other subject. While the diplomatic process leading to the Dayton agreement was ongoing, policymakers in Washington paid almost no attention to anything involved other than issues related to the composition and mission of IFOR. This inattention was a main reason that more robust resourcing and staffing for the Office of the HR was not considered and that coordination for all the myriad of civil activities, from demining to refugee returns to reconstruction, was not provided for.²⁵

The gap between the military and other functions, however, was not the result of inattention but rather the insistence of the military. This gap was intended to ensure that the military would not find itself involved in functions that it regarded as not in its proper sphere and that might lead to deeper involvement in Bosnia. From the outset, though, the gap created problems. The military, though very slowly at first, almost immediately began to step into this gap. The U.S. component of IFOR found itself from the first aiding in minefield clearance, providing for freedom of movement between the two portions of Bosnia, and intervening to stop violent demonstrations. In its after-action report, the commander of the U.S. IFOR contingent, Major General William Nash, wrote that for the first six months IFOR "was the only organization capable of organizing and synchronizing civilian operations."²⁶ The U.S. military responded to the myriad of local problems by stepping in and bringing together local officials of different communities to accomplish tasks like controlling the activities of local police forces and ensuring free trade.²⁷

The logic of U.S. involvement and of the Dayton agreement meant that the role of the military in implementation would inevitably expand. Many of the civil provisions of the agreement were quite ambitious. The U.S. as the author and primary sponsor of the agreement could not afford to walk away from it, and the U.S. military--along with the other IFOR national contingents--was far and away the institution most capable of taking on such responsibilities. To take on these responsibilities, it would be necessary to extend the deadline for withdrawal of IFOR. The deadline was first extended by President Clinton for 18 months and was subsequently dropped altogether.²⁸ Reasons external to Bosnia were partly responsible for this. IFOR/SFOR was NATO's first-ever

operational mission and to leave it less than a success was unacceptable. But there was also a decision within the U.S. government to expand the role of the military in Bosnia to a more active one in pursuit of specific civil goals. This change specified that SFOR would now aid in refugee movements, more actively seek to detain war criminals, force the demilitarization of remaining paramilitary groups, and close media outlets that undermined the implementation of Dayton.²⁹

After its efforts first to avoid and then to minimize its role in Bosnia, the U.S. military found itself in the situation of Oedipus, the figure of Greek tragedy, who fleeing his fate ran straight into it. Confusion in U.S. policy towards Bosnia left a vacuum in the policy discussion into which the military representatives in the foreign policy apparatus stepped. This confusion started in the Bush administration, though between the time when the issue came to public attention and the election was too short to form a coherent policy on a new and complex issue. It continued into the Clinton administration and intensified. The policy confusion and the relative political strengths of the President and the military combined to give the military the most powerful voice in the policy debate. After military commitment to Bosnia was finally settled, military influence in the U.S. government turned to ensuring an acceptable role for the military in Bosnia, using its influence to strictly limit its own role in Bosnia. At the outset of the IFOR mission, this led to a failure to take initiatives and make progress at the outset when the situation was highly malleable, before those opposed to Dayton could recover from the effort of the war, adjust to the new conditions, and consolidate their power. In fact the stability created by IFOR without a corresponding effort to make progress on political problems provided Bosnian politicians--the same ones who had started the war and in some cases

profited financially from it--the opportunity to entrench themselves and deal undisturbed with internal political competition from more moderate factions. This made the day when IFOR/SFOR could finally leave Bosnia farther off.³⁰

In hindsight it is hard to avoid the conclusion that once President Clinton had offered to provide up to 25,000 U.S. troops to enforce a negotiated peace in Bosnia, doing so was almost inevitable. It seems clear that the Bosnian Serbs, if left unchecked, would have pursued their political aim of an ethnically pure state to the very end and without scruple. At the very least, this would have created a humanitarian disaster, a flood of refugees, and a blizzard of ugly images in the media. Public opinion in both the U.S. and Europe would have found this unacceptable, and the political stability of Europe would have been threatened. To mid-1995, both the UN and European Community had demonstrated their incapacity to deal with the situation. The Clinton administration was under more or less constant pressure from U.S. public opinion and from members of Congress from both parties. In 1995 in the aftermath of UN fiascos in Bosnia and especially in Srebrenica, in light of growing stress over the issue between the U.S. and some of its closest allies, and particularly given the possibility of committing U.S. forces to aiding in the withdrawal of UN forces in a hostile environment, such involvement could be postponed no longer. In the end, with the extension of the IFOR/SFOR mission and the broadening of its tasks, the maximalists in the Clinton administration got their way, though by that time the accomplishment of their broader goals had become more problematic.

In the debate over military involvement, the U.S. military did the Clinton administration a disservice. Given Clinton's personal political problem with military

issues, articles and public statements by military leaders "saying no" to military involvement had the effect of taking one instrument of the national power out of the President's hands. The initial instances of this in early 1993 were a factor in the failure of the Vance-Owen plan, success of which might have enabled a settlement at that time roughly along the lines of the Dayton agreement. These intra-U.S. debates were surely followed abroad by friends and enemies alike. The public dispute between the military and the President on this particular issue combined with the very public and pointed disrespect often shown him cannot but have encouraged those who wished to carry on the violence in Bosnia unimpeded. This may well have played some part in the deterioration of the situation and in the end made U.S. involvement more likely, more risky, and more difficult. If in pursuit of his policy objectives the President and Vice-President feel compelled to rebuke their military leaders for lack of support, this is surely indicative of a serious problem in the conduct of these debates.

In this the military also did itself a disservice. Officers at the most senior levels will inevitably be drawn into political matters. Decisions on force structure, national strategy, and other similar matters are political decisions that require input from the military. However, giving this input publicly has the effect of showing the military as taking sides. Because of its public involvement in the decisions relating to military involvement in Bosnia, the military was publicly seen as taking a side. In addition to having the effect of removing one option from the national choices for dealing with Bosnia, it also opened the military to accusations that it was championing its own narrow interest in the debate. Those making these accusations assert that the military is above all interested in ensuring its own success, avoiding risk irrespective of the possible gain, and

only interested in undertaking missions which are laid out and defined in such a way as to absolutely preclude the chance of failure by seeking to do as little as possible. The fact that military leaders recommended to the most senior levels of the U.S. government the placement IFOR headquarters outside of Bosnia so that a flag officer might have appropriate quarters and that they also recommended IFOR deploy only in the Federation lend credence to these criticisms of the military. Some writers, including former military officers, ridiculed the preoccupation with force protection in Bosnia on these grounds, noting with derision that U.S. troops there were well equipped with video games, pool tables, and ping-pong tables and that they were safer and much more healthy than the military as a whole. The posture of NATO forces in Bosnia during IFOR was described as "somewhere between detachment and timidity." This posture and the state of U.S. forces in Bosnia was said to be the fulfillment of the only mission that the military had deigned to accept.³¹ Remarks, apocryphal or not, along the lines of "we don't do mountains" also contributed to the disservice the military did to itself and were also more than likely noted with interest abroad. This remark in the intervening years has evidently become a commonplace. A U.S. soldier of the 10th Mountain Division said this to a British journalist in Afghanistan in early 2002 in answer to a question about his mountain warfare training. The journalist went on to speculate in print that this must be why the U.S. had been so eager to see the British Royal Marine Commandos, who are mountain warfare trained, deploy to Afghanistan.³²

The point is not whether or not these accusations about the U.S. military are true; the point is that given the public engagement in political debate by the military they are fair to make. Discussions of what missions the military can be assigned and what military

methods will be used in the accomplishment of various missions are political discussions. If the military chooses to enter publicly into these discussions, particularly as an advocate of a given viewpoint, this could have two major implications. First, this may give those against whom military action is considered a very good idea of what they might do in opposition to U.S. military force that would have various political effects within the U.S. in furtherance of their objectives. For instance, a public debate on rules of engagement or the relative priority of force protection might show an opponent that the achievement of certain effects against a U.S. force could influence the political support for the mission in the U.S. For this reason, the military's advice on these matters and the substance of the policy discussion should be discrete.

But most importantly, in entering a political debate, especially as an advocate, the military puts itself on the same level with the elected and appointed political leadership and injects itself into the political arena. This would over time almost inevitably erode popular trust in and respect for the military; after all, politicians have been derided and despised in popular culture for centuries. This would also make the military an object of the kind of political rhetoric and questioning to which politicians subject one another, such as the questioning of motives and integrity, accusations of bureaucratic interest, and linking by political opponents of military decisions to perceived advantages to military decision-makers. Private, candid advice to political leaders will be more effective and avoid these problems, while public commentary and advocacy, even for the best of reasons, will lead over time right to them. If this happens, the military can blame only itself.

For Further Research

The most pressing and interesting topic for further research in this area would be an examination of the U.S. military's estimate of Serb--both Yugoslav and Bosnian--military intentions and capabilities. According to every source consulted for this paper, the U.S. military believed as IFOR deployed into Bosnia that the Bosnian Serb military was a credible and organized military threat, and held that neither the Bosnian Croat nor Bosniac militaries were capable of challenging them. This was not true in the estimation of many observers, as noted earlier in this paper. Richard Holbrooke recounted to a meeting of senior SFOR officers in late 2000 that he had been told by military officials repeatedly since 1992 that the Bosnian Serbs were about to finish off the Bosniacs; that in 1995 General Shalikashvili told him and senior Croatian officials that the Croatian offensive against the Serbs had no chance of success; and that since 1995 military officials always insisted that if Bosnian Serbs indicted for war crimes were arrested there would be a widespread, violent reaction on the part of the Bosnian Serbs. After listing these and other statements by the military, he added that in none of them had the military estimate of the situation turned out to be correct, and that he had ceased to put any stock in what military analysts had to say about the situation.³³

It would seem that there are two possible explanations for this. The first would be that the military overstated the threat to raise the assessed risk for operations in Bosnia and thereby reduce the likelihood of being deployed there. Once deployed there, greater perceived risks would make it less likely that the military would be given missions such as arresting war criminals. The second possibility is that the Bosnian Serb military and

the situation in Bosnia were not examined closely enough and while the order of battle of the Bosnian Serb Army was well understood, what was not accounted for was its poor morale, constant problems with desertion, and other problems covered up by the indiscriminant employment of artillery and paramilitary thugs rather than true infantry supported by artillery in combined-arms operations. This may have been compounded by a failure to note the impressions of the Bosnian Serb leadership gained by Holbrooke, Generals Clark and Kerrick, and others who dealt with them, who unanimously agreed that they were simply bullies who would not stand up to firm action on the part of NATO and the U.S. Whatever the cause, the result was an intelligence failure that is deserving of study.

A second area that would repay further examination would be the effect on the situation in Bosnia of U.S. debate over policy towards Bosnia, which was conducted in a very public fashion. During the U.S. presidential campaign in 2000, Bosnian political leaders frequently displayed a great awareness and knowledge of elements of that campaign that might influence their interests. Though this knowledge was frequently quite shallow and warped by their own misunderstanding of the U.S., this knowledge frequently influenced their strategy and decisions.³⁴ Those involved in the conflicts surrounding the breakup of the former Yugoslavia certainly had as good an awareness of the debate in the U.S., including that over whether or not to employ military force. It would be useful to study the influence this debate had over the actions of the parties in Bosnia and, if this influence is found to have been inimical to U.S. interests, to consider how the influence of public debates in such circumstances might be lessened or turned in favor of the U.S.

¹Rick Atkinson, "Serbs Detain Croat Soldiers; Faction Generals Snub Nash," *Washington Post*, 12 January 1996, A22.

²Author's recollection. I served for over two years as a military attaché in Bosnia, from the spring of 1999 to the fall of 2000, and got to know all of the senior military officers and ministers in the country personally. My impression of their deference to SFOR and the U.S. in particular was quite strong.

³Author's recollection. I was one of the channels they used.

⁴Headquarters U.S. Army Europe, *Operation Joint Endeavor After Action Report*, March 1997, III-19; Institute for Defense Analysis, *Operation Joint Endeavor Description and Lessons Learned*, November 1996, 66.

⁵United States Government, Executive Office of the President, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Week Ending Friday, December 29, 1995 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), 31:2221-2227.

⁶*OJE After Action Report*, III-20.

⁷Dean E. Murphy, "Limits on GIs in Bosnia Hide 'Human Face' of Peace," *Los Angeles Times*, 21 January 1996, 1.

⁸Woodward, "Upside-Down Policy," 129; Kohn, "Erosion of Civilian Control," 18; A.J. Bacevich, "Hunkered Down in Bosnia," *The Weekly Standard*, Volume 1, No. 43, Washington, D.C., 22 July 1996.

⁹Author's recollection.

¹⁰Headquarters, 1st Armored Division, *Task Force Eagle 28 December 1995 - 10 November 1996*, II-14.

¹¹Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 256; 291; 310.

¹²*Ibid.*, 152.

¹³*Ibid.*, 323.

¹⁴William T. Johnsen, *Insights Into the Balkan Enigma* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1993); William T. Johnsen, *Deciphering the Balkan Enigma: Using History to Inform Policy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1995); U.S. Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, Testimony of Rear Admiral Mike Cramer, 29 January 1993; U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences Special Product, *Understanding Cultural Landmines in the Balkans: How the*

Land and Its History Have Kept a People at War, 2001. These are only a few examples out of many of military personnel explaining the Bosnian conflict solely in terms of 'age-old' ethnic conflict. SFOR rotations between mid-1999 and the end of 2001 were still explaining the conflict to visitors in these terms only (author's recollection).

¹⁵One factor in the mistaken evaluation of the situation may have been the book *Balkan Ghosts*, by Robert Kaplan. Many in the U.S. government, including President Clinton, read the book and drew from it the conclusion that violence was somehow endemic to the Balkans. However, only a short portion of the book concerns the former Yugoslavia, and of that portion only a few pages concern Bosnia. Scholars of the region reviewing the book are very critical of it for overemphasizing the violent aspect of the region's history--especially the former Yugoslavia's--and ignoring centuries-old traditions of coexistence that existed between and within the large majority of communities in Bosnia before the war, traditions amply documented in the historical research on the region. Noel Malcolm, review of "Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History," *The National Interest*, Washington, DC, No. 32, Summer 1993, 83; Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1993), 21-23

¹⁶ John Pomfret, "Fires Pose New Threat to Serb Suburbs," *Washington Post*, 11 March 1996, A15; John Pomfret, "Serbs Burn Enclave of Sarajevo," *Washington Post*, 17 March 1996, A1.

¹⁷1st Armored Division, *Task Force Eagle*, II-15.

¹⁸Judah, *The Serbs*, 304. I was told the same thing by an intelligence analyst who deployed to Bosnia with the initial IFOR rotation (author's recollection).

¹⁹Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 328.

²⁰John Pomfret, "Bosnian Serbs' Leader Stages Show of Defiance," *Washington Post*, 9 February 1996, A01.

²¹Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, 363-363.

²²Author's recollection. This emphasis on the apprehension of Karadzic and Mladic came after statements by both in the Bosnian Serb media urging specific measures to resist SFOR and the international community in the implementation of various parts of the Dayton agreement, and a willing response on the part of the Bosnian Serb population. The new emphasis on their capture changed what had to that point been efforts to do so that had been desultory.

²³Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 324-235.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 338.

²⁵Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 174.

²⁶1st Armored Division, *Task Force Eagle*, I-3.

²⁷1st Armored Division, *Task Force Eagle*, II-14.

²⁸Michael Dobbs, "Bosnia Exit Deadline Crumbles," *Washington Post*, 28 October 1996, A01; James Kitfield, "Bosnia Forever," *National Journal* Vol. 30 Issue 36, 5 September 1998, 2016.

²⁹Daalder, *The Road to Dayton*, 177.

³⁰Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 338.

³¹Bacevich, "Hunkered Down in Bosnia"; Kohn, "The Erosion of Civilian Control."

³²Julian Manyon, "We Don't Do Mountains," *The Spectator*, London, 6 April 2002, 14.

³³Author's recollection. My personal experience is that the U.S. military in Bosnia continues to overestimate the threat from the Bosnian Serbs as well as from other sources. My observation of the Bosnian Serb military during visits to their units and headquarters from the spring of 1999 to the fall of 2001 was that there was a severe alcohol problem in the ranks, that junior soldiers lived in squalor, that equipment was neither maintained nor ready for employment, and that the senior leadership was more concerned with their personal perquisites than with anything else. The leadership and others who had been in the Bosnian Serb Army during the war told me that, with the exception of the state of its equipment and the capability of a handful of units, the Bosnian Serb Army was about the same as it had been during the war.

³⁴Author's recollection. In late summer of 2000 one of the most hard line of the Bosnian Croat nationalist politicians told U.S. military attaches that, since in his opinion George W. Bush would win the election and Bush had stated his intention to withdraw U.S. forces from the Balkans, Croat nationalists intended to wait for the withdrawal of the U.S. and the inevitable withdrawal of SFOR that would follow and then scrap the Dayton agreement.

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